Class 2434 Book C76
General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY
Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

TREASURES OF HOPE FOR THE EVENING OF LIFE

By the Rev. GEORGE CONGREVE.

Christian Life a Response. With other Retreat Addresses and Sermons. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

Christian Progress. With other Papers and Addresses Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

Popular Edition. Crown 8vo, paper covers, 7d. net.

The Spiritual Order, with Other Papers and Addresses. Written for the most part in South Africa. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

With Prefaces by the Rev. GEORGE CONGREVE.

Præparatio: Sundays; or, Notes of Preparation for Holy Communion founded on the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for every Sunday in the Year. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

Præparatio: Holy Days; or, Notes of Preparation for Holy Communion, founded on the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for every Holy Day and Saint's Day in the Year. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. net.

My Communion: Twenty-six Short Addresses in Preparation for Holy Communion. By the Author of "Præparatio." Crown 8vo, 3s. net.

The Book of the Craft of Dying and other Early English Tracts concerning Death. Taken from Manuscripts and Printed Books in the British Museum and Bodleian Libraries. Now first done into Modern Spelling and Edited by FRANCES M. M. COMPER. With a Frontispiece. Royal 16mo. 6s. net

Celestial Fire. Being a Book of Meditations on the hymn "*Veni Sancte Spiritus,*" written in the Seventeenth Century by RICHARD WHITE. Re-edited by E. M. GREEN. Fcp. 8vo, 2s. 6d. net.

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

London New York Bombay Calcutta and Madras

TREASURES OF HOPE

FOR THE

EVENING OF LIFE

BY THE LATE REV.

GEORGE CONGREVE, M.A.

Of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, Cowley S. John, Oxford

PUBLIC LIBRARY
NEW YORK

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C. 4
FOURTH AVENUE AND 30TH STREET, NEW YORK
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

1918

243.4
C76

65413

"We are saved by hope."—Rom. viii. 24.

"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love . . . and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."—Heb. vi. 10, 11.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

Mr 27 '19

NOTE.

THE origin and scope of this book are sufficiently described in the letter addressed to the Rev. Mother Superior of the Community of S. Mary the Virgin at Wantage, with which it begins. It only remains for the editors to add a few words in explanation of the circumstances in which it was written.

Father Congreve was engaged upon it during a great part of the last year of his life, and up to within a very few weeks of his death. Indeed it had not received the last and careful revision which he would certainly have given to it had he been able. This will account for a certain lack of form and finish compared with his other books, and also for some amount of repetition both of thought and expression. Many of the papers here gathered together consist largely of extracts from former writings of his own, and from books which he happened to be reading from day to day. Some, however, are entirely new, and were written expressly for this book. All of them manifest the characteristic grace of his mind and heart, and the felicity of expression, which are familiar to all who knew him personally, or through his letters and other writings. The deeper note which runs through them is the outcome of his personal experience as age, with its limitations and infirmities, grew upon him. His increasing deafness, and for the last few months the difficulty of movement, necessarily shut him out from much of the intercourse with his brethren and friends which had always been to him so great a source of happiness and refreshment. At the same time, as these chapters show, this enforced

solitude drew him more and more into a close intimacy with God, in a constant spirit of prayer, and an ever-brightening hope of what lies beyond the limits of this transitory world. Towards the end there were times of much weariness and suffering, but those who were privileged to spend some hours with him day by day during the last months and weeks could not but be conscious of the wonderful deepening of a character which had always been to them a source of inspiration and encouragement.

A few words from the Vulgate version of the eighty-third Psalm,[1] which formed the subject of one of his addresses in the last retreat he gave to our society, seem to reveal the secret of his life: *Ascensiones in corde suo disposuit* (he hath set ascensions, aspirations, in his heart). *Ascensiones in corde*—this was the dominant characteristic of his inward life, a constant habit of lifting up his heart and mind from earthly things to their heavenly counterparts, and of rising out of nature into grace, not always easily and spontaneously, but often in spite of weariness and depression, by sustained efforts of will and the exercise of faith. Thus it was that "passing through the valley of weeping" he "made it a place of springs."[2] Some kindred words from another Psalm might well be taken as a descriptive motto of the purpose and effort of his long life of eighty-two years: "All my fresh springs shall be in Thee."[3]

The editors have thought it best to print the book just as Father Congreve left it, omitting only a few obvious repetitions and supplying, where possible, references to quotations.

[1] Ps. lxxxiv. (A.V.). [2] Ps. lxxxiv. 6 (R.V.).
[3] Ps. lxxxvii. 7, Prayer Book version.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A LETTER TO THE REV. MOTHER SUPERIOR OF THE CONVENT OF S. MARY THE VIRGIN AT WANTAGE - - -	9
II.	HOPE, THE NURSING MOTHER OF OLD AGE -	15
III.	THE CITY OF GOD - - -	27
IV.	OLD AGE IN RELIGION - - -	34
V.	FORTITUDE - - - -	43
VI.	LIFE'S ADVENTURE - - -	52
VII.	THE IMMENSITIES - - -	63
VIII.	OCCUPATIONS AND INTERESTS PURSUED IN OLD AGE - - - -	72
IX.	THE TEMPER AND OUTLOOK OF OLD AGE IN THE CHRISTIAN - - -	74
X.	A PENITENT - - - -	81
XI.	ASCENDENCE - - - -	83
XII.	GRACIOUSNESS - - - -	85
XIII.	JOY - - - - -	93
XIV.	A SECRET - - - -	99
XV.	DAFFODILS - - - -	102
XVI.	THE BEAUTY OF GOD - - -	105
XVII.	FELLOWSHIP - - -	121
XVIII.	PAIN - - - - -	126
XIX.	SUFFERING WITH CHRIST - -	132

CHAPTER		PAGE
XX.	DERELICT - - - -	144
XXI.	MEMORY - - - - -	153
XXII.	PRAYER - - - - -	161
XXIII.	THE DESIRE OF HEAVENLY GLORY -	171
XXIV.	THE LAST SPIRITUAL RETREAT - -	187
XXV.	PREPARATION FOR DEATH - -	200
XXVI.	MOTHER HARRIET, FOUNDRESS OF THE CLEWER COMMUNITY - -	207
XXVII.	HOME - - - - -	213
	APPENDIX - - - -	222

I.

A Letter to the Rev. Mother Superior of the Convent of S. Mary the Virgin at Wantage, by way of Dedication and Preface.

DEAR REV. MOTHER,

Some years ago you suggested to me to write something for the encouragement of Religious who are surprised by old age and find the difficulty of dealing with life under new conditions of infirmity and bodily failure. I have lately been more free to put together a few considerations that I hope may not be unacceptable to those who, like myself, have reached a stage in the journey of life where the loss of health and power to serve others is felt.

It will be a kindness if I may claim of you more indulgence for the little book than it deserves, by reminding you that such as it is it is due to your suggestion, and asking you to be its sponsor.

I cannot excuse its ungainly form. I had no thought of writing a book, but desired to collect, wherever I might find them, counsels and encouragements for others, such as old age teaches me that I myself need. I hope I may be forgiven for what I have borrowed from several writers. When I had anything to say from my own experience, I have tried to say it in my own way, but generally I have aimed at giving from the example of worthies of whom I have read, or whom I have known personally, what seemed most helpful to me in regard to the special difficulties of our later years.

One feels instinctively that the Christian's last stage of the journey on earth should enjoy some special happiness, since it is generally a stage in which the pace of life must slacken, and there ensues leisure to taste the good that God has wrought out for us and in us, through all the active service of a long life, when perhaps there was little time in interior exercises to "taste and see how gracious the Lord is."

Montalembert has a charming passage[1] on the happiness of the monastic state for those who are faithful in it, which concludes with special reference to old age.

"Thus," he writes, "in the midst of tranquil labour and a sweet uniformity, their life was prolonged and wrought out. But it was prolonged without being saddened. The longevity of the monks has always been remarkable. They knew the art of consoling and sanctifying old age, which, in the world—but especially in modern society, when a devouring activity, wholly material, seems to have become the first condition of happiness—is always so sad. In the cloister we see it not only cherished, honoured, and listened to by younger men, but even, so to speak, abolished, and replaced by that youth of the heart which there preserved its existence through all the snows of age, as the prelude of the eternal youth of the life above."

"Monastic writers," he adds, "employed a special term to designate that disposition which was native to monastic souls—*benignitas*, that is to say, benevolence elevated and purified by piety; *benignitas*, a word entirely Christian, entirely monastic, and as difficult to translate as the other two habitual virtues of the cloister, *simplicitas* and *hilaritas*." But these three virtues have a special fragrance and significance in the aged Religious.

[1] Montalembert, "Monks of the West," Vol. I., 52. J. Nimmo.

It will be something gained if this little book may set forth happiness as a hidden treasure specially belonging to our failing years to discover and enjoy. The discipline of Religion in your Community is always teaching your Sisters that this treasure is to be sought, not in their external activities themselves, however generous they may be, but in the heart that, inwardly united to God, consecrates to Him all that is done.

A writer of to-day[1] well suggests the mystery of happiness to be discovered, not in any external work, but in the soul itself—the inmost substance of the soul that loves. "Être heureux," he says, "c'est s'exercer à voir le sourire caché, et les ornements mystérieux, des heures incalculables et anonymes, et ces ornements ne se trouvent qu'en nous."

And if it specially belongs to old age to discover and enjoy happiness where it is not found on the surface of things, I have tried to point to the gracious energies of Hope, "the nursing mother of Age,"[2] as revealing happiness within the grasp of the faithful will, when it is united to God. It becomes possible, and the Christian's duty to be happy in every stage of his pilgrimage, because "Christ in us is the hope of glory," and "we are saved by hope." But old age seems to have a special prerogative of hope, seeing that it has reached that point which brings us so near in time to the full manifestation of the things hoped for.

Yet, on the other hand, I have observed that the inevitable change from a life of energetic, self-sacrificing work for others to inaction, vacancy, and the arm-chair by the fireside in old age, may be a very spiritually confusing and depressing trial. To meet it I have wished to bring out clearly the true motive of all Christian service. A generous soul devoting his life to active

[1] Maeterlinck. [2] Plato.

service of the Church soon learns that God Himself is the real object of all charitable service of our brethren. "Forasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." It is for the love of God that the Christian dedicates himself to serve the members of Christ whom God loves. We remember how when our Lord worked miracles of healing He was wont to lift His eyes from the helpless object before Him to Heaven, suggesting to the patient that it was a heavenly power He was preparing to put forth, and that its effect did not end with any result on earth, but aimed at Heaven for the complete attainment of its purpose. And this true energy and effective power of Divine love the Christian is not to lose by infirmity of age. As he loses power to work on the surface of things, he is reaching nearer to the centre, the infinite source and object of love. The real value of all his active service in the day of his strength was the love with which it was done and lifted up to God in sacrifice. And now that God bids him put all his work aside, He tests His disciple to prove whether in his activity he sought himself, or God only. If he has worked hard purely for the love of God, he will welcome God's will in his helplessness, as joyfully as before he welcomed it in his power to work. Love kept him joyfully and vigorously at work then, and now love, that grows always more brave, sends him joyful and contented into silence and vacancy, if that is the discipline by which God wills that love is to ripen and be perfected.

And the truth of this hope for old age is constantly appearing in some mystery of special blessing that the aged bring us. They can no longer work for us, but in their infirmity they give themselves more simply than ever to God, and we find that in consequence their

power to help and bless us has advanced through that which threatened to end it. The Christian, gradually released by infirmity of age from active occupations on the surface of life, will be more than ever drawn towards the centre, and absorbed in God Who is Love—to find himself more happy in God through all his solitary and vacant hours, than ever he was in the exhilaration of active service. This is a wonder of grace for us, a witness to the eternal realities; it lights up for us the way of life just where we expected to lose sight of it entering the valley of shadows.

For all that is taken away from the faithful soul by age something better is given. "When He gives earthly blessings, give thanks; and when He takes them away give thanks. For it is He Who gives, and Who takes away; but Himself from him that gives Him thanks He takes not away."[1]

I give to my little book for title "Treasures of Hope" because its principal aim is to point to that virtue as a special prerogative of Christian Old Age, when we have no time to waste in regretful contemplation of things past and gone, but are preparing to welcome that which is before us. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us."[2]

May I mention to you a book that seems to me to be full of light and cheer for us in age, and that would enrich any Community library, namely "Le Vieillard. La vie montante, Pensées du Soir," by Mgr. Baunard. Paris: J. de Gigore, Editeur. The book opens with this passage:

"Tout d'abord le concept que je me fais de la vieillesse, le voici: Ce n'est pas le déclin, c'est le progrès; elle

[1] S. Aug. Enarr., in Ps. 33. Ser. 2. [2] Titus ii. 13.

ne descend pas, elle monte. Et c'est de cette vie montante que je voudrais dire dans ce livre, le bienfait, la grandeur, les révélations supérieures, les joies intimes, les devoirs solennels, urgents, et la suprême espérance."

Finally, in whatever is said in this book about prayer, I hope that simple souls that read these pages will discover that it is written for them. I should not dream of writing for persons far advanced in contemplative prayer. But I greatly desire that my reader may recognize that the way of prayer in which the Holy Spirit leads the soul is always, and for all, a way of hope and of advance. However we may have failed in the past in this respect old age does not close our prospect of progress in prayer. A fixed low standard of communion with God could never be His purpose for any soul. I hear God's call to me in the changes that age brings, and every call of God is a call to advance, for it is a call to Himself, the absolute, the infinite Good. We will never say, "Alas! in my active days I failed to make progress in the spiritual life, in communion with God, and now age comes to tell me I must stop where my lost opportunities have left me in dimness and coldness." No, in old age I hear God call me to awake and draw nearer to Himself. And now I would fly to Him if I could, but if I cannot fly I will go, and when I cannot go I will creep to Him. And to be nearer to God will make years of age and feebleness the best of all, if in them I have learnt by His grace to persevere and make progress in prayer.

This is the hope I have tried to suggest as vital and characteristic in Christian old age. If it may have your encouragement I shall be grateful.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

GEORGE CONGREVE.

II.

HOPE, THE NURSING MOTHER OF OLD AGE.

γλυκεῖα γηροτρόφος ἐλπίς.
—Plato Rep. Bk. I., 331, A.

PLATO has a delightful passage in his "Republic," in which Socrates meets his friend, the aged Cephalus, and draws out in conversation his experience in regard to old age. Cephalus concludes as follows:

"To him who is conscious of no sin, sweet hope, as Pindar charmingly says, is the kind nurse of his age."

"Hope," he adds, "cherishes the soul of him who lives in justice and holiness, and is the nurse of his age and the companion of his journey;—hope which is mightiest to sway the restless soul of man."

I imagine myself discussing the special characteristics and opportunities of the latter years of human life with an aged friend who has attained to explore their resources, and to learn their more intimate secrets. And it is a surprise to me that in answer to my inquiry, which of all the virtues specially belongs to that period of a Christian's life in which the physical and mental powers begin to fail, he replies, with Cephalus, that the crown and perfection of old age is the virtue of Hope. He reminds me of Pindar's phrase quoted above, "Sweet Hope, the tender nurse of old age." I confess that for me to find Socrates making

this discovery throws the light of a new joy on all human life.

It ought not to have been a surprise to me to find hope recognized as the specially characteristic virtue of old age, for I had the same mystery shining for me throughout the Christian revelation, and in the development of Christian character as one reads it in history. S. Paul had said the same thing: he glories in tribulation because tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience—which is the harvest of old age—not the depression of the disillusioned, but hope. Nature recognizes in old age only the decay of faculty. "The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone." —Ps. xc. 10.

That is nature's last word; but after the sentence is passed, and silence follows, the still small voice of grace is heard within the soul of the new-born—the voice of a life from above awaking and speaking to God, and listening for an answer. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? What is my hope? Truly my hope is even in Thee."—Ps. xxxix. 7.

Barzilai, oppressed by the burden of years, excuses himself from accompanying the king over Jordan on the ground that he is too old at eighty to enjoy the pleasures of the court. But Moses, under the weight of a hundred years, in the power of the Holy Spirit, leads an oppressed nation out of bondage to liberty through the Red Sea.

Experience must be always developing hope in the Christian. because a true experience means all that he does or bears through faith in God, and faith is not

merely a defensive power that keeps evil at bay; it is the Christian soul's unconquerable initiative; it is man in his weakness taking hold of all the power of God to enable him to do or suffer what God wills. It carries victory into every battle, and does not wait the chance to find it as the result of its battle. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 John v. 4.

The painter's lyric of Hope[1] represents her stripped of everything belonging to this world that could help or comfort her. She is poor, and blind, and alone, and of her harp of seven strings all are broken save one. She is the very picture of dereliction, and of the poverty of old age, that has lost one by one all links with earthly support and cheer. But the joyful mystery is that there is no trace of depression in all her poverty—that in her utmost destitution it is more than ever Hope that saves. I can see that all her soul is bent down to listen to that one string that remains to her broken harp, by which all the music of Heaven reaches her. However empty and silent the winter of life leaves us, we are saved by hope, which is the spiritual blossom of faith and love that are alive out of sight, at the root of the soul.

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Yet there is nothing in the circumstances of human failure and decay to give birth to hope. The worldly-wise man sees in old age nothing but a source of regret. King Solomon, referring to it, speaks of the *evil days* that are coming, the years in which we shall say, I have no pleasure in them, when the light of the sun or of the stars will be withdrawn, and clouds return; when the

[1] The picture by G. F. Watts, R.A.

strong limbs begin to totter, and the eyes grow dim, and all the daughters of music are brought low, and the grasshopper is a burden. This prospect of age anticipated chills even the soul's enjoyment of prosperity in earlier life. The Preacher warns us that, "If a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many," and pitifully sums up the experience of both youth and age, "All that cometh is vanity."

Hope, as the special characteristic of old age, is purely a Christian paradox, a revelation of an essentially Christian mystery. That Socrates before the Christian era caught a glimpse of it is only another proof of the exceptional spiritual illumination that raised him above the level of his age. S. Peter makes hope a fruit of regeneration in Christ. He blesses God, "Who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Wherever there is Christian hope it is a new birth, an effect of the supernatural change wrought in human nature by incorporation into Christ.

"A Meditation for a Friend's 89th Birthday"[1] attempts to express this mystery of hope as the characteristic of old age for the Christian. "If I find no home any longer in this world, it is because God has been withdrawing me, my love, my treasures, my remembrances, my hopes, from a world where the frost-wind of death touches every precious thing, where no good can last, but night falls, and only icy solitude and silence remain. This is no home; this is but a lodging for a wayfarer who tarrieth but a day. God is making all things dark and silent round me in order that dim eyes may the better catch His signal light, and dull ears

[1] See "The Spiritual Order," G. Congreve, p. 325.

listen for His call. One sign from Him, and, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' I shall sleep and wake to find that God Himself is my Home, where I shall come to understand myself at last, and all that was never understood before, all that my youth and age meant; and there, too, I shall find the faces and voices that I had lost; yes, when I wake up in His likeness I shall know God, and all things in God, and be satisfied.

"So I will try to remember what this growing loneliness of age means; I shall feel that it is God giving me a sign; it is my true Home drawing me away out of this strange world to itself. I must begin to hunger for home, and to listen for the first stirrings of the spring of the new life—God's life in me—which enshrines the hopes of all my pilgrimage, and everything that is dear to me. . . .

"My God, my life has grown very quiet of late years; I am sure it is on this account that so much I used to delight in has died out of me, because Thou wouldest come to me to take its place. Therefore I am waiting all hushed for Thee.

"This silence of my life is no emptiness of mere death, but is rather like the hush of a night in spring, when the earth is asleep, but dreaming of the new birth that comes to-morrow. My life grows bare of earthly joys, because God is preparing some better thing for me, when I shall be empty enough to receive it; so I am learning to look up and wait for God.

"I seem almost asleep, but my heart is awake, and full of a strange hope. Memory sleeps, action sleeps, thought sleeps, but love is awake. It does not think, or plan, or labour to remember, but it loves; it is withdrawn from the surface of life to the centre, to

wait a little while, and take its rest in God, and there also to have its awakening. . . . I know in Whom I have believed ; He bids me sleep, and I close my eyes, but it is with the hope of opening them to behold the Uncreated Loveliness when I awake.

" My God, I would not die as the unconscious things, the frozen sparrow under the hedge, the dead leaf whirled away before the night wind. While I have mind, memory, feeling, and will in my power, I rise up in Thy Presence to make the last choice of penitent love, and resolve that I will live for Thee, and die for Thee only.

" Is not the one good of life to give it to Thee ? That hope makes one rich when everything else is gone."

Not only have we hope in God, but He Himself is our hope. See how Dr. Pusey makes this mystery shine for us. He writes : " The glory of the mystery of the Gospel, says S. Paul, is, ' Christ in you the hope of glory.' Christ Himself is our hope, as the only Author of it ; Christ is our hope as the End of it ; and Christ, Who is the Beginning and the End, is our hope also by the way ; for he saith : ' Christ in you the hope of glory.' Each yearning of our hearts, each ray of hope which gleams upon us, each touch which thrills through us, each voice which whispers in our inmost hearts of the good things laid up in store for us, if we will love God, are the light of Christ enlightening us, the touch of Christ raising us to new life, the voice of Christ, ' Whoso cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out ' ; it is ' Christ in us the hope of glory ' drawing us up by His Spirit Who dwelleth in us, unto Himself our hope. For our hope is not the glory of Heaven, nor joy, nor peace, nor rest from labour, nor fulness of our wishes, nor sweet contentment of the whole

soul, nor understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, nor only a torrent of delight; it is 'Christ our God,' 'The hope of glory.' Nothing which God could create is what we hope for; nothing which God could give us out of Himself, no created glory, or bliss, or beauty, or majesty, or riches. What we hope for is our Redeeming God Himself, His love, His bliss, the joy of our Lord Himself, Who hath so loved us, to be our joy, and our portion for ever."

"And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in Thee."

It is a morning in early spring. I know to-day that a long and very depressing winter is past; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come. Yesterday I was searching among the havoc left in our garden after an exceptionally cruel winter, to see if anything survived; and among the tangle of debris, the pride of last summer, now stark and dead, suddenly came upon a wonder of perfect loveliness—a nest of large purple bells of the pasch flower, Anemone Pulsatilla, each with its gold heart and silvery down on the unfolding leaves. It was startling among the spoils of death and decay to come so unexpectedly upon life that had suffered and survived. But it was much more than a mere survival: it was a revelation—a mystery; it was glory cherished, developing, and rejoicing under decay and ruin; it was a victory of Divine purpose, that not merely survives death, but brings out of it the praise of a new birth of supreme loveliness.

For me it was a revelation: I saw in the wonder of its freshness a Divine word taking created form with radiant power and surpassing vitality and beauty. I knew by a touch of creaturely sympathy and of Divine Grace that the infinite Love cared to bring one

little hidden plant out of winter ruin to glory. It was God's love, beauty, and joy that met and startled me when I discovered the wonder. I knew that it was He Who cherished its hidden life in the flower, and developed that strange beauty through death; and further, that the same infinite Love is preparing a like wonder on every side in the development of human souls through suffering, decay, and death. This was no mere conviction arrived at on grounds of probability; I say it was a direct and personal revelation of God's last word of life, love, beauty, and joy, made to me through the Easter glory of the little plant almost buried under the winter decay of its neighbours; and now it was easy to understand how it is that old age has the joyousness and tenderness of sweet hope for nurse.

But there is a more authentic evidence of hope as a special characteristic of old age than any spiritual intuition nature conveys. For example, here is a passage from an old letter by one who, feeling himself inadequate to the opportunity, had been bidden to preach at All Saints, Margaret Street: "I send you Mr. Berdmore-Compton's note to show you what a dear old gentleman he is:—you see he takes pains to put me at my ease about the sermon. He said to me the other day, 'Benson is not as young as he was; he must not try to do so much. The body gets feeble, but I think one gets to do things with more spirit as one gets old.' I felt there was something there that I longed to get closer to, so I ventured to ask him, 'What do you mean exactly?' He answered quite kindly and frankly, evidently well knowing what he meant—'Well, I think every sermon I preach now the most important thing I ever did. I think I feel that more than in my youth.'

This," the old letter continues, "is a saying which sticks by me, and fills me with hope for old age, and thanksgiving."

And here is Professor Huxley saying to us, "Draw comfort from the fact that if error is always with us, it is, at any rate, remediable. I am more hopeful than when I was young."[1] Sir Thomas Overbury wrote: "The good man feels old age rather by the strength of his soul, than by the weakness of his body." And Nettleship: "We get to the higher life, not by thinking away the lower but by carrying it with us."

A great Christian king does not in old age seek the higher life by laying down his burden with his crown, and entering a monastery, but rather by rousing his spirit to carry his heavy cross through to the end in spite of weariness, and so to reap the full harvest sown by so many faithful labours never refused; since every labour accomplished for God is a seed of eternal hope, of which God Himself will be the harvest.

I am glad to be allowed to add the words that follow, for they seem to me to breathe the very spirit of Christian hope.

A septuagenarian sinner, not without the gift of faith by God's mercy, addressed a friend rather older than himself, who could not claim the gift.

"Let us be braver as the end draws near, and crown the natural with the supernatural. Let us fall down before the Incarnate Lord, and ask of Him all instincts that are true—the increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity—the fulness of the Spirit, here and now, the broken heart, and all that makes for peace."

[1] "Life," Vol. II., p. 385.

HOPE THAT SAVES.

A note on Rom. v. 3, 4, 5: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

S. Paul, who builds hope so high ("we are saved by hope," Rom. viii. 24), suggests that its foundation is laid deep in a fellowship with the sufferings of Christ,[1] in tribulation, patience, experience. Sorrows and sufferings accepted in the way of duty bring us into the fellowship of the sorrowful mysteries of the saving Cross, and consequently associate us also with its triumph.[2] They make us comrades of all the Blessed who have ever suffered for righteousness' sake, companions of all the Saints in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

S. Paul seems to find in suffering for the highest cause spiritual knighthood, the accolade of the King, the conferring by an embrace of the highest honour, and the nearest place to Himself. But he expresses this in a way we do not expect. "Experience" of patient suffering "worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Does he not here on purpose say less than he means, in order that we may seize a meaning greater than words can express, as when he says elsewhere, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ"?[3] Does he not imply that through experience of patient suffering Christian hope reaches much more than security that will not be disappointed—reaches even assurance, inspiration, enthusiasm? For now hope is no longer a small balance

[1] Phil. iii. 10. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 10. [3] Rom. i. 16.

to the good in a calculation of chances. It is inseparable from its sisters faith and charity, and its source is the life of God in the newborn soul—"God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Hope's victory is won before the first stroke of the battle. It is itself a victory, because it is a virtue, a divine achievement, a soul's grasp of God, that has ceased to trust in man. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."[1] It is allied to loyalty and to fortitude. To give way to depression, to face the day's sorrows without hope, is to have lost the battle before it begins; it is to betray our cause, to take it out of God's hands and surrender it to the welter of earthly chances.

This grace of the higher hope that never boasts, that is no variable mood, but a spiritual temper of hearts welded by patient endurance, and confidence in God, is that spirit of victory, that *morale* so often recognized on our side in this war, invincible in the long run, cheerful, chivalrous, instinctively generous.

This seemed to be expressed the other day in a private letter referring to a great leader in our national affairs who was then on his death-bed.[2] It was said of him that he had been all his life enthusiastic in great endeavours for the good of the Empire, "and now he is meeting death with the same enthusiasm." Here I find an echo of S. John's phrase when he calls himself "your companion in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."[3] Through suffering this generous soul finds his place in the very heart of Jesus as King, where He reigns from the tree. Sharing His sufferings he shares His love and His royalty, and there his service of the nation is raised to the companionship of Christ's Knights, and

[1] Rom. viii. 28. [2] Earl Grey. [3] Rev. i. 9.

his hope becomes full of immortality. He meets his death with enthusiasm, because love has made all his life sacrifice. Death for him is no sordid and solitary catastrophe; he offers it to God with all his heart in the fellowship of the death of Christ upon the Cross. In that fellowship his death becomes sacrifice; it consecrates everything that he brings to God, whatever he has done and suffered—makes it a means of union with God, raises it by fellowship with the Lord's suffering to the level of His throne. Yes, and fills up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His Body's sake, the Church; makes his little sufferings through the merits of Christ's Passion to help and enrich all the holy nation, makes one more willing sufferer in the way of duty in the highest sense the "*Companion*" of all the citizens of the Heavenly City.

The reflection of this mystery of Grace upon the *military* character is expressed by Wordsworth in "The Happy Warrior."

> —"It is the generous spirit. . . .
> Whose high endeavours are an inward light
> That makes the path before him always bright. . . .
> But who, if he be called upon to face
> Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
> Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
> Is happy as a lover; and attired
> With sudden brightness, like a man inspired."

III.

THE CITY OF GOD.

THIS is the festival[1] of the Victory of our City, the heavenly Jerusalem, as far as it has gone, for it is always advancing. I do not say that every hour makes its final triumph more sure, for in the hour of our Lord's resurrection it was assured once and for ever, but every hour brings nearer to us what is already certain in the end, the complete manifestation of His victory. That victory in the morning of the Resurrection is working to-day in the character of every soul that perseveres in grace. Christ's victory by the Cross is the secret and all-sufficient power of every faithful Christian's life; the business of the Christian in this world is to carry at his cost that perfect victory further towards its consummation; in this hope the Saints at rest, and the Saints still in conflict, live and build up together the City of God.

But I do not find the splendour of this prospect reflected in the tone of all the really Christian people I meet. To-day I am cheered by the light of hope that a friend's face and tone always bring me. I am convinced to-day with him that the war has by God's grace wonderfully roused the world out of dense stupidity, unreality, and neglect of God, and is going to bring us

[1] All Saints.

a new era of international relations founded on Christian morals. But yesterday I was filled with depression that distilled like November fog from the conversation of another good friend who habitually sees only the reverse of all that encourages hope. What am I to think, for I have evidence of facts that tend to hope, and of others that spell despondency? Is it reasonable to hope, or does truth oblige me to despair?

Does not this festival, the contemplation of the glorious City, the City of God, help us to answer the question? Surely those only can live in the gloom of depression who do not look far enough ahead, whose thoughts are arrested by the first serious discouragement, and stop there, are content to look no further, and delay to take the next brave step onward towards the end—God, and the complete victory in the heavenly Jerusalem. The City of God is growing every day in glory, but those of its people who are still militant in this world of conflict live as yet by hope and love; they are strangers in a hostile land, and have to fight every day for their life, that is, for God, for honour, and truth. But for the Christian it is never a question whether it is more reasonable to hope or despair for his cause; for his cause is God's cause, and God's cause is not the cause of just this or that particular moral principle, as justice, or mercy, but God's cause is the personal victory of Him Who is in Himself all goodness and perfection, God over all, blessed for evermore. The only reasonable attitude of mind for the citizens of our City is hope, not because God is on our side, but because we are on His side, and His victory will be ours, and His victory can never in the long run be in question.

But though the victory of the City of God is certain

in the end, it is never won by any Saint through fortunate circumstances, but only by whole-hearted endeavour. For every inch gained on the way to Jerusalem the Saint has had to fight. Generally circumstances have been dead against the men of our City. Athanasius became the Saint he is because when there was every reason to despair, he faced the world, and fought out Christ's battle almost alone. "Athanasius contra mundum." The Saint is a fighter in this world, not accidentally, but primarily and essentially as long as he is still in the midst of evil. Evil surrounds him in the world, and evil hides within him, but Christ reigns in his heart, and Christ is his victory, no matter what the odds against him. The Saint will be victorious because he keeps his place in God, by the energies of faith and hope and love, not because temptations and difficulties are removed, or circumstances are made easy for him. The Saints have found no peace in this world; things have been always difficult for them, often contrary and depressing, sometimes desperate. Their cheer never meant that a calculation of chances left them a small balance of hope, but when there was no earthly hope at all left, they cherished Christ in their hearts for their hope, and by suffering the worst won Christ's victory afresh for our City which is above. When the Martyrs were slain the world rejoiced in its short-lived triumph. One worldly soul there was, intelligent enough to see that the Saints' failure of a day was their victory for eternity, and his "Vicisti o Galilæe!" acknowledged it.

Hence the Saint will never parley with depression or despondency. Whatever catastrophe may threaten, he comes up to it in God. Christ risen and ascended dwells in his heart, and that is his victory won already

There may yet be blows to give and receive, but from the first the issue is certain.

This accounts for the joy of the Saints which generally marks even their conflict in this world. "The joy of the Lord is their strength" all through their darkest day. Joy is a special characteristic of all Saints. They rejoice to conquer, not for themselves, but for the love and honour of Christ, and of His City, Jerusalem which is above. And the joy of all the victories of all the Saints, which make our City splendid, is joy for every soul still struggling with sin here below to share. It is joy for each of us not vague or legendary but founded on history. Looking up the Christian sees in every perfected Saint some special victory of Christ apprehended, and worked into the Saint's character; he sees, rejoices, and is encouraged.

But this encouragement is not what the mere appeal to history might bring us, "What others have done we may do." It is the encouragement of a living fellowship. In Christ by grace of the Holy Spirit we are one body with all Saints. Their joy of love is ours, their enthusiasm, their confidence in God, their praise, we share it; it is the breath we breathe. We come up to our daily difficulties, not alone, but in Christ along with all the Saints and their victories.

At this time of sorrow and heart-strain, and especially here in England, we need to realize afresh, and habitually, the Communion of Saints in Christ, which we profess. In anxious hours when we see ourselves surrounded by enemies it will be for us the opening of eyes to behold the mountain full of chariots and horses of salvation: we shall discover the spiritual life all round the earthly life, the spirit of victory will awake in discouraged souls when we realize that we go nowhere

without the Saints, for we live our life in God in Whom every Saint lives. Living our life in Christ, whose glorious Body the Saints are building up, we find ourselves "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." We go through dark ways often, and discouraging and perplexing circumstances, but always in high company, companions of the Saints "in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

"The joy of the Lord is your strength"; but this strength of joy in the Lord, which is the spring of Christian hopefulness, needs an atmosphere in which to breathe freely, a substantial world, a Kingdom of Heaven in which to realize itself by acting, and being acted upon. And in Christ we find that new world of redeemed humanity, the Communion of Saints, in which we can exercise the common life that makes us one with them.

Is the communion of blessed souls a fellowship in which our part is only to receive blessing by their prayers? Is there nothing for us, militant here on earth, to minister to them? The Russian Church teaches her children not only to ask the prayers of the Saints but also to pray for them. By this time almost every one who prays at all in England prays for the faithful departed; this points the same way. We are finding that the communion in Christ of souls separated from each other by death is no longer a venerable theological formula of little interest to us because it awakens in us no response of practical duty, offers no opportunity of mutual service for us and those who have passed beyond the Great Silence. Three years of war that have bereft us of thousands of the dearest lives have made us aware of a vital link established between us and them, a channel ever open in Christ for mutual giving and receiving of love and blessing. This faculty

of a common life and love we exercise in the highest way at every English Altar as often as we lift up the joy of our "Ter Sanctus," that it may be offered to God along with the praise of all Saints in the Holy Mysteries. *There* is an act of love and fellowship in joy done by us on earth that associates us directly with all the Saints in their heavenly worship.

Other trials besides the present cruel war may bring in time to each of us the need to discover this new world of fellowship, the Communion of Saints; for we grow old, and gradually reach a sphere of loneliness and silence in the vale of years. The young cannot, perhaps, though in their kindness they would, be companions of the aged. And so we find ourselves some day stranded, unnecessary survivals of a generation that is gone. Then it is happy for us if by the grace of the Holy Spirit we have learnt the reality of the Communion of Saints in Christ. As we read the lives of these immortals and seek their fellowship in prayer and thanksgiving, we realize that we too in Christ are still alive, and that love does not grow old. If we have lost our place in this fast-vanishing world, we have found it again, and for ever, in the Heavenly City. And then, if it should be so, we shall not despise our present uncheerful surroundings in order to shut ourselves up in dreams of another world; but the enthusiasm of the love of our true Country shall awake in us, and we will try to bring its warmth and brightness into the loneliest places, and least kind circumstances. Like the prisoner in the Tower of London who filled long hours and days of gloom with joy of the Companionship of the Saints, in his song, "Jerusalem, my happy Home." Or, as another who sang of the City of the Saints, and would spend all his strength in the

endeavour to build its glorious towers here in our clouded world, and "among the dark Satanic mills":

> I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem,
> In England's green and pleasant land."

There is no excuse left for fear of the future, or for a habit of depression, in a Christian. He is established in Christ by faith and love, and will have the habitual outlook of hope. Life for him will mean nothing less than the carrying forward a victory won already by Christ in the persons of all the Saints, "a great multitude which no man can number." Evil may threaten him at every step, but cannot stop his way; it is only something for him to pass through, with the help of the prayers of all the Saints, and his face set to go up to Jerusalem: his Citizenship is in Heaven, and Jesus Christ is the Way there.

IV.

OLD AGE IN RELIGION.

LECTIONS FROM S. AUGUSTINE FOR THE NIGHT OFFICE FOR THE FESTIVAL OF S. JOHN.

"Then, Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me."—S. JOHN xxi. 20.

A HOMILY of S. Augustine the Bishop.

"Two different states of life have been received by the Church, both commended to her by her Divine Master. The one is a life of faith, the other of sight: one is passed in a season of journeying, the other in an eternal abode; one in labour, the other in rest; one on the way, the other at home; one in the toil of action, the other in the reward of contemplation.

"℟ This is that John who leaned on the Lord's bosom at the supper. Blessed Apostle to whom were made known the secrets of Heaven. ℣ He drank of the waters of the Gospel at that hallowed source.

"Therefore the one is good though it embrace suffering: the other is better by reason of its felicity. The first is signified by the Apostle Peter, the second by John. The whole course of the first extends to the end

of the world, and is then terminated; the fulfilment of the second is postponed till the end of this world, and in the world to come it hath no end. Hence it is said of the first, 'Follow Me.' But of the second, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.' What doth it mean? So far as I understand or grasp its meaning, it is, "do thou follow Me in the imitation of My temporal sufferings; let him await My return with never-ending happiness."[1]

S. Augustine finds in the Lord's words addressed to S. Peter concerning the Blessed John a Divine suggestion of the active suffering life, and of the tranquil interior life of contemplation. He sees the first in the apostolic labours and martyrdom of S. Peter, the second in S. John, who lived on to extreme old age in comparative peace in order to teach the Church the mystery of contemplation or Divine love. The life of toil and suffering ends with this world; the life of contemplation, though learnt and imperfectly exercised here so as by the Spirit to raise us in heart and mind to the throne of God already, is only perfected in Heaven. The years of S. John were extended to extreme old age, not because he was forgotten, but in order that he might learn to love, which is the highest kind of prayer. The long years were to grow rich in contemplation, which though learnt on earth waits for its perfect exercise in Heaven.

Here is joy for us, for the prolonging of life to old age is represented not as the mere working out of a penal sentence, a purgative exercise, but, both for the active and for the contemplative soul, as an opportunity for advance to a higher experience of communion with God. The active spirit will learn by his extended

[1] From the Night Office for S. John the Apostle.

trial a more childlike trust, and the joy of love in suffering accepted to the glory of God. The more interior soul, deprived by infirmity perhaps of all possibility of working to the glory of God, finds that if work is no longer possible, it is because something better than any work is opening for it, the learning of a higher employment—contemplation, love in rest, the occupation of the Blessed in Heaven.

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me."—S. John xxi. 18.

Here is the call of Christ to the active and external spirit of S. Peter. The Lord will lead him through strange experience of suffering. He who could only think of suffering as an intolerable indignity for Christ to endure, will learn to win glory to God from imprisonment, from apostolic labours, and from a cruel and shameful death. He will learn to surrender the independence of vigorous youth and manhood in Herod's dungeon, and later, as the helpless prisoner of old age. Those hands and feet that were wont to be so forward and free in serving Christ will learn to offer Him a higher glory when nailed helpless, immovable to a cross, and find a spiritual freedom in the willing surrender for love's sake of all initiative. The spirit that sought the glory of God by its activities will learn that God's glory does not depend upon those activities; but that God, Who was glorified in youthful success, can shine out more gloriously in the completest failure, accepted joyfully

in love. It is not by his miracles but by his death that S. Peter will glorify God.

The call that comes to the interior or contemplative spirit seems to imply the tranquillity of long waiting and of hiddenness. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The secret of this vocation will be known only to the disciple who has learnt it leaning on the Lord's bosom. Our name for it is love; but who cares to know what it means? Who is willing to pay the full price for that jewel of which it is written, "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would utterly be contemned"? [1] It filled the long, solitary years of hermits in the desert; it grew to wonderful experiences in elect souls hidden by the unconsidered details of domestic life, like Mary, who, we are sure, neglected nothing at home, yet found time to sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word.

In the Blessed John the mystery of the interior life grew through the many silent years, lost to history, spent in the service of the Churches in Asia. He reveals himself in the Apocalypse only as "your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." He suffered for Christ, but is silent about his sufferings. He lived through long years of patient waiting for Christ, but the secret of them is with him alone in the Lord. And yet tradition preserves one echo of the mystery of the old age of the disciple whom Jesus loved. S. Jerome gives it to us in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians as follows:

"Blessed John the Evangelist, when he lived at Ephesus in extreme old age, and could scarcely even be carried by his disciples to the church, and could then

[1] Cant. viii. 7.

not make any long discourse, used to exhort the people in no other words than these: '*Little children, love one another.*' At length the disciples, and the brethren who were present, wearied of always hearing the same thing, said, '*Master, why dost thou always teach us this?*' He answered, and the answer is worthy of John, '*Because it is the command of the Lord. And if ye perform it, it suffices.*'"

This trait of the last days of the Blessed John illustrates perfectly what we learn of the discipline and achievements of the interior life of prayer. The soul that makes progress in that life does not find itself advance in any power to do great things; its advance is in poverty, emptiness, nakedness of spirit, while simple love more and more fills all the emptiness, and makes powerful and effective the little and common things that an aged person or invalid can do. For now that little service stripped of every thread of outward importance has its source in the upper springs, and an altogether new value. The Holy Spirit, God's Love, lives and works in that soul, for whom the promise stands, "My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."[1] A modern saint, speaking of this experience says: "I saw myself led by the Spirit of God in a manner so clear that the Spirit of God animates my soul, and gives it all the life and movement that it has. His life is my life; His heart is my heart; it is through Him I breathe and love."[2]

This perfect surrender and union of the soul with God is the special aim of the dedicated life in Religion—a union which God may accomplish at any age, but

[1] S. John xiv. 23.
[2] "Life of Armelle Nicolas."

which most naturally belongs to the later years of the Religious.

By the dissolution of monasteries the English Church swept away some treasures of experience, which, upon the rebirth to-day among us of the Religious Life, she can but slowly recover with pain and through sundry mistakes. This will be realized, as in other respects, so perhaps especially in regard to the problems that old age presents. How is the dedicated Religious who learnt to understand his vocation as separating him from secular life, especially through the demands made on him by the Church for unremitting charitable work, how is he to consecrate the years of forced inaction and of mental and bodily failure that may await him in old age?

To our joy it will be always remembered first of all that the aim of the Religious does not change with changing circumstances. No Religious was ever called of God to any work, however important, for the sake of that work itself as his end. If he is released by infirmity from all active work, the question for him is not how he may less tediously while away the hours emptied of all real value, because emptied of all active work; not how he may forget past years full of usefulness and influence that he cannot help regretting, and find some harmless mechanical employment for idle hands; not how he may face the breakdown and failure of a life. It is not the end of all things that he has to face, but a new stage of advance, under new conditions. Having had his training in prayer and in the love of God in active service, how can he now carry forward his response to the Divine call to higher experiences than ever? Having acquired the spiritual gains that faithfulness in the mixed life brings, how can

he begin to use them in climbing heights of the interior life that only now begin to appear ?

To an active soul grown old in Religion you would not say, " You have done your work, it is time for you to outspan. Your burden is lifted off the tired shoulder, sit here in the sun, or in the shade, and sleep till the Master comes and calls you." Rather you would say, " You have tried to climb, carrying your burden ; now you are released from it, and the heights still unreached call you on to climb more freely and with a lighter heart. No step gained hitherto in the active life is lost, you have only to start afresh from where you are, and secure what has been already gained by advance to whatever remains still to be reached higher up."

All that the good activity accomplished in the past remains for ever in God, and is the seed of a higher attainment still in the advancing prayer of the doer. He has to add to the account of his external charitable work, closed now for ever, something better still—the sacrifice of himself perfected in love and patience. He welcomes the discipline that bids him be still, and finds in his prayer that God is much more to him than ever he knew in the days of his external usefulness.

It would be despair to imagine that the end of our activity is the end of life for us. It may be the happy beginning of something much better. S. Ignatius the Martyr, in extreme old age, a prisoner on his way to martyrdom, wrote to the Church, " Now I begin to be a Christian." His active life was over, but in the helplessness of his captivity there opened for him the view of a higher life of witness to Christ than ever he had caught a glimpse of in the days of his ministerial labours.

That is the first consideration : when work is finally

taken out of our hands, it does not mean that the use of life is over, but that the previous life is going to be effective in a new way; a new door is opened to us to a higher stage of our journey, for which any faithfulness in past activity will have prepared us. There is no limit to the progress in the knowledge and love of God that lies before us; here is a new unveiling; here our Father in Heaven calls us up in our retirement into a "privacy of light," undreamt of in our active years. "Be still," He says to us now, and begin to "know that I am God."

The special business of old age is that of a Spiritual Retreat, and it behoves us to learn how to make the best use of it, how to make a perfect response to the privilege of the Divine invitation.

Is there not an echo of this higher vocation in the Commentary of Cornelius a Lapide on the Epistles of S. John, where he writes: "S. John breathes and enforces nothing but the love of God, of Christ, and of our neighbour. He is like old men and lovers, who think and speak of nothing else but what they love, and have loved all their lives."

Here, once more, we find the same mystery of advance in Divine love by a great loss of all that love might wish to do of service, a completer emptying of self that God may fill it. In the Life of S. Thomas Aquinas we read that on the 6th December, 1273, he laid aside his pen, and would write no more. That day he experienced an unusually long ecstasy during Mass; what was revealed to him can only be surmised from his reply to Father Reginald, who urged him to continue his writings. "I can do no more," he said; "such secrets have been revealed to me that all I have written now appears to me of little value." That

which seemed to be a failure was really an advance in the perfecting of prayer which a long life led up to at last in age. We do not look for exceptional favours accorded to great saints, but old age should have the same prospect for us as for them; it should bring us by God's grace the fruit of all previous spiritual discipline, and a real advance towards the perfecting of contemplative prayer.

V.

FORTITUDE.

"His Majesty loveth exceedingly courageous souls."—S. THERESA.

BEFORE quoting some generous examples of Fortitude that are within our reach for the encouragement of failing years, it may be well to notice that theologians distinguish between active fortitude, which they count among the cardinal virtues, and passive fortitude, a gift of the Holy Ghost given to those who seek perfection of life through the Divine counsels. S. Augustine defines this highest kind thus: "Fortitudo est Amor omnia propter Deum facile perferens."[1] It is irresistible to turn once more to Ruskin's interpretation of Botticelli's picture, "Fortitude," and read there the real charcater of this virtue:

"What is chiefly notable in her is—that you would not, if you had to guess who she was, take her for Fortitude at all. Everybody else's Fortitudes announce themselves clearly and proudly. They have tower-like shields and lion-like helmets, and stand firm astride on their legs, and are confidently ready for all comers.

"But Botticelli's Fortitude is no match, it may be, for any that are coming. Worn, somewhat; and not a little weary, instead of standing ready for all comers,

[1] "Love enduring all things for God's sake easily."

she is sitting, apparently in reverie, her fingers playing restlessly and idly—nay, I think, even nervously—about the hilt of her sword. For her battle is not to begin to-day; nor did it begin yesterday. Many a morn and eve have passed since it began—and now—is this to be the ending day of it? And if this—by what manner of end?

"That is what Sandro's Fortitude is thinking, and the playing fingers about the sword-hilt would fain let it fall, if it might be; and yet how swiftly and gladly will they close on it when the far-off trumpet blows, which she will hear through all her reverie."

Bishop Paget writes of this virtue, "Fortitude may be exercised chiefly in doing very little things, whose value lies in this, that if one did not hope in God, one would not do them; in secretly dispelling moods which one would like to show; in saying nothing about one's lesser troubles and vexations; in seeing whether it may not be best to bear a burden before one tries to shift it; in refusing for oneself excuses which one would not refuse for others. These, anyhow, are ways in which a man may everyday be strengthening himself in the discipline of fortitude, and then, if greater things are asked of him, he is not very likely to draw back from them. And while he waits the asking of these greater things, he may be gaining from the love of God a hidden strength and glory such as he himself would least of all expect; he may be growing in the patience and perseverance of the saints."[1]

There is a noble and Christian tone in the reply of Dante, growing old in exile, to his native city, Florence, which had offered him an amnesty and leave to return on dishonourable terms, as tradition preserves it.

[1] "The Spirit of Discipline," p. 48 (Longmans).

"If by no honourable way," he wrote, "can entrance be found into Florence, then will I never enter. What? Can I not from any corner of the earth behold the sun and the stars? Can I not under every climate of Heaven meditate the all-sweet truths?"

The same brave patience appears impressively in the record of the sufferings of the Blessed Paul of the Cross.

There we read that "After fifty years of a penitential life had elapsed, his illnesses were frequent, and most painful, through habitual infirmities which tormented him up to his death, and had been contracted by his exertions in promoting the glory of God, and particularly by a journey from Rome to Orbetello, made in 1745, which brought on a serious illness that left behind it pains and tormenting sciatica. During his illness, and when attacked by the most violent of his pains, he suffered with a courageous soul, and was so far from yielding, or allowing himself to be overcome by impatience, that he even spent his time in singing joyfully. . . . He practised this pious exercise of singing devout prayers and litanies that he might not disturb others with complaints, and to prevent himself from making any exclamations through the violence of the pain.

"Not only by singing did he endeavour to prevent the signs of pain, that might have rendered him burdensome to those who assisted and visited him, but possessing his soul even in the midst of pain and weakness, he recreated the minds of others in his spiritual conversations with some joke or pleasant story. Being in great pain one day he said to a friend, 'I am willing to remain thus all my life,' and to one who asked him how he felt, he replied, 'Let us thank God'; looking upon the pains of sickness as presents and precious

visits from our Lord. With all these infirmities, if his pain was in some degree mitigated, he went to work in the missions; and so great was his fervour in the work of God, that when he took his staff in hand he seemed no longer lame, and continued the apostolic ministry with great courage and generosity of soul.

"The Saint suffered also still more from interior desolation and dryness in prayer. He knew the spiritual value of such trials, and went on his way loyally, offering them to God with endless patience. He said to one of his penitents, 'I do not like you to think so much of your little trials, darkness, and aridity. The pure and true love of God makes us always consider little and trifling what we suffer for the Divine Love. Believe me, if you think you suffer much, it is a sign that you have a very small degree of love for our Lord; for the true mark of Divine love is to suffer great things for the Beloved, without thinking that we suffer at all. I beg you to make known your treasure as little as you can; I mean the treasure of suffering. Suffer, and be silent.'"[1]

An Apostle recommends different exercises for their relief to Christians under different circumstances. "Is any afflicted, let him pray, is any merry, let him sing psalms."[2] This Saint did not wait for the removal of his pains, but had the courage to welcome his afflictions with singing. In this he reminds me of a poor woman in a Wiltshire country-town, whom, as curate, I used to visit in her sickness. She was incurably ill and suffering, and lived alone. She told me of the long sleepless nights, without the comfort of any human being in the empty house. "What do you do all those

[1] "Life of the Blessed Paul of the Cross," Vol. II., p. 294.
[2] S. James v. 13.

long hours of the night without sleep ? " I asked ; and her answer I have never forgotten : " I mostly sing."

Mrs. Fraser's " More Italian Yesterdays " gives us a generous example of the allied virtues—Fortitude, Patience, and Magnanimity—in the story of a Pope's exile and imprisonment. She writes :

" Pope Pius VII. (Barnabo Chiaramonte) in an interview with a diplomatist, sent by Napoleon to extract impossible concessions from him, closed the conversation thus : ' Please bear in mind that I only authorize you to report of me to Napoleon and Metternich what I am now going to tell you—that I am perfectly resigned to God's will regarding me, and that I humbly place my cause in His hands. Say that no consideration of any kind shall induce me to disobey my conscience and the Divine law. Tell them that I am calm and serene, and that all I ask of the Emperor—for whom I only hope and pray that he may be granted to make his peace with our holy mother the Church—is that he will allow me the means of communicating freely with the faithful, and that he will no longer deprive them of the services of their father and servant. Tell the Emperor that I entreat him to remember that the glory of this world is in itself no passport to Heaven ; that, albeit I yearn with all my heart to be reconciled with him, yet that I will never be so at the price of my conscience. Assure him very earnestly that I have not the smallest personal feeling against him ; that I forgive him with my whole heart all that he has done to me. . . . My health and my eyesight are giving out ; I do not feel that I shall be able to carry my burden of solitary labour very much longer.' After an allusion to certain ' last weapons ' that remained to him that he might be obliged to employ, he added,

'Do not be afraid of my doing anything precipitately, for I pray constantly for grace and strength sufficient to enable me to carry my cross patiently. But if you only knew, Lebzeltern, the unceasing anguish of my solitude, you would not wonder at what must sometimes appear to you incomprehensible inconsistencies in my attitude. . . .' Alone with his doubts and difficulties and age and ill-health, and the insidious temptations put before him by the Emperor's instruments, what is there astonishing or blameable in the great difficulty he simply confesses in curbing his temper? He remained a prisoner until Napoleon's downfall.

"Pius VII.'s own revenge on Napoleon took the form of offering safe and honoured homes, and the means to live, to his mother and his entire family, after his downfall. Whereby many descendants of the Bonapartes are counted among the Roman nobles at this day."[1]

In illustration of the gift of Fortitude I venture to quote a page from the "Memoir of Arthur John Butler," loved and honoured by so many in our own day, by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch (page 212):[2]

"On March 3rd, 1907, it was discovered that he was suffering from diabetes. He was always sanguine about illness; and the courage he had more than once put into others, now, when his own time came, proved itself undiminished, being genuine. A friend writes:

"'During the months of Butler's ill-health I admired unceasingly his courage and his serenity. . . . He early recognized his limitations, and made the best of

[1] "More Italian Yesterdays," by Mrs. Hugh Fraser. Hutchinson & Co., London.
[2] Smith, Elder & Co.

them. He looked the dangers in the face, and did not permit them to sadden him. . . . Knowing that life was precious, he went about his literary undertakings as quietly and steadily as he had done in health, and he continued to enjoy, as always, the society of friends. He said to me in so many words that he had no inclination *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.* His calm, envisagement of his disabilities was at once a lesson and an encouragement.

" He wrote to his doctor : ' My dear——, I hope my " courage " is not of the variety which results from ignorance of danger. But in any case I do not see much to be afraid of. Sixty-four years of life (mostly inefficient) ought to be enough for anybody. But it is hard to conceive oneself in imminent peril when one feels as well as I do. . . . The snowdrops and aconites are beautiful, and the thrushes are singing like mad.'

" He broke the news to me in a letter half-humorous, half-wistful. It managed to convey that the trouble might be spoken of freely, but that the skeleton must on no account be treated as a bugbear.

" He went steadily on with his task at the Record Office. He had always been severe with himself about keeping engagements ; never, for seventeen years, missed a day at the Education Department ; never once in forty-nine years stayed in bed for breakfast ; could not tolerate the young who were late of a morning, servants who scamped their work, or (worst of all in his eyes) clergymen who neglected their duty. But his spirit was not less cheerful than austere. . . .

" He gave his inaugural lecture, on appointment as Professor of Dante Studies in University College, London, on October 27th 1909, having but a few months to live. He died after five days' illness, February 26th, 1910.

"Towards the end he expressed a wish to be buried at Wantage, 'where the larks sing': and there, at the foot of the Berkshire downs he was laid on March 1st. . . . Dante's Rose of the Blessed is carved on the stone covering his grave, with the words, '*Luce, Amore, Letizia,*' with which Beatrice welcomed her poet to purest Heaven."[1]

I trust also that Dr. Paget will forgive me for appropriating a very interesting passage from his book, "I Wonder," in reference to this brave virtue. In the chapter on "The Wonder of Pain" he writes: "Next I touch a graver theme, how pain begets fortitude. We all have deserved, and I hope have received, the sweet praise of bearing this or that pain well. Never forget to praise a child for bearing pain well; never try to persuade a child that pain is not painful. Acknowledge with him the reality, the terror, the dominion of pain: then rejoice with him, celebrate his victory of the spirit over the flesh, attend his triumph, along the *via sacra* of his youth, up to its Capitol, there to render thanks to the Father of all the Gods. Though you should neglect one or more of the many shrines in your heart, never be neglectful of the shrine of fortitude; offer there frequent worship, exalt fortitude among the highest objects of your prayers. To bear pain well is to be not only man but also God. All through our lives fortitude remains above possibility of explanation, a divine act, a downright interposition of Providence to help us to be good. It so rules and sways the admiration of mankind, that Christianity

[1] Paradiso, chap. xxx., 40-42. His own note on this passage is "Light, Love, Joy, are the complements of Faith, Love, Hope." Because he had always loved the sea, this verse of the Psalmist is added, "So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be."

was founded and built on the Passion: and the line is unbroken down from that example to the least of us bearing well the least moment of pain, though it be no more than a cut-finger.

"Nowhere does fortitude leave off till the pain has left off, and you can say truly that it does not hurt. Even the most vulgar sorts of pain, such as are not mentioned in public, and those which are most evidently deserved, are ennobled by the proper bearing of them. Fortitude illumines pain like sunshine, or like a procession through dull streets: it writes Victory across the very page where Failure was written. And the best of it is that no occasion is too trivial for its exercise, no point of our lives too low to catch its light."[1]

[1] "I Wonder" Essays for young people. By the writer of "Confessio Medici." Macmillan & Co.

VI.

LIFE'S ADVENTURE.

"Christ in you the hope of glory."—Col. i. 27.

"Tell us a story," we used to ask of any really sensible friend in our childhood, for we were just starting on the voyage of life, and were keen to learn what it would be like—what the great adventure that was opening before us might promise. And the story always carried us as far as our interest required, for, how else could it end, but, "And so they lived happily ever afterwards." That was enough for us then, but by this time, we old people have arrived at the point where the story left us, and the voyage is not over yet. Straining our eyes along the western horizon as evening falls, we catch no trace of sun-suffused islands of the Blessed breaking the line of interminable distance, and new questions arise in our mind that never occurred to us to ask in our childhood: "They lived happily ever afterwards." But, after all, they grew old, no doubt, and how did they manage then? And old age itself doesn't last for ever, and what follows? What port did they find at the very end of the voyage?

For one thing we begin to discover that when the voyagers reach it they will not find that old age cuts off and closes the happy life the story was to reveal.

It turns out that the years of old age belong essentially to the voyage, bring new adventures, new dangers, difficulties, and discoveries, which reveal its purpose, and develop and enrich the personality of the voyager. In old age the Christian begins to understand the experiences of his youth, and gains by them in later years a surer knowledge of his course, a keener outlook, and a habit of watchfulness. Age does not kill the happiness that childhood rightly expects life to bring, but raises the ideal, and deepens the capacity for happiness in the soul.

But there is more than this, for probably the happy life that we are born to expect instinctively can hardly be understood at all at the setting out of life. It needs the toil, the sorrows and disappointments of the voyage to teach us the deepest mystery of all concerning life—that God Himself is our true happiness, the one object and end of every human soul, the port, the rest, the reward of every voyager. The sorrows of age are the clouds that attest the triumph of the new sunrise. This is the discovery that makes happiness grow keen sometimes in later years, as all light of youth and of home, all comfort of family love, fade from this world, and the heart finds in God a closer bond, a surer support, a beauty that is life, that is love, that is infinite, that gives Itself all to each of us. And now in God the Christian not only believes but tastes his own immortality; and the old man's quiet life in God will prove no mere sleeping off of past toil, but his preparing to embark on a new voyage with an ever lifting horizon of before undiscovered love, a voyage in which all peril and sorrow of the sea—that is, of the earthly life—is left behind for ever and forgotten.

The child is right in his intuition that he was born

for adventure: but he does not know how necessary the process of years is for him, that he may gradually learn how much grander the adventure really is than his brightest visions suggest. It is true, as he takes for granted that God sent him into the world for a great discovery—to find happiness: yes, but ignorant as he is of his own capacity and need as yet, he cannot spring to the conception that happiness for the human soul is as high as God Himself—is found perfectly only in the soul's union with God.

The final answer to the children's appeal, "Tell us a story," is the story of the Gospel. Christ has come into the world to reveal to us this wonderful destiny. The significant word that expresses a good so far above our poverty and low views is *glory*. God gives to us by the Sacraments Himself and His glory; "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them."[1] And this transcendent gift we learn by degrees to appropriate not in the enjoyment of earthly privileges and successes, but, on the contrary, as we gradually lose one earthly support after another, and make room for God Himself to become all things to us.

I believe we sometimes religiously, and often unconsciously, put aside the idea of glory, as something that in this world we have nothing to do with—something that belongs to perfected saints in a future existence; and we patiently gird up our loins for a life of drudgery, as the proper portion for the faithful on our way to the heavenly Jerusalem, which at last we shall find glorious, no doubt, if we should ever have the happiness to come there. But now, at any rate, in the quiet of our later years we have time to remember that our name and place in the City of God is not only a matter of hope for

[1] S. John xvii. 22.

a future world, but that in Christ we are come already to the heavenly Jerusalem;[1] that no soul is called in Christ to drudgery, to acquiesce in the inevitable failure of everything in a fallen world—to think we must be content to share the gradual decay of all created things. We will try to grasp the mystery that as sinners forgiven, and restored to God in Christ, already in this world we are called to glory.

S. Peter, the Apostle of penitence, who knew so well the darkness that it brings into life to deny Christ—he is our teacher in the glory which belongs *now* to the penitent, to the converted. He writes to Christians in Asia Minor, who like ourselves had never seen the Lord, and were then suffering persecution for His sake: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The terrors of persecution will prove the source of a greater happiness, "If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."[2]

This glory is obviously *not* the final glory, the reward of the Saint's victory in a future Heaven, but a real and eternal glory given already to strengthen him for the fight to each poor Christian, as being united to God in Christ—as baptized into Christ risen and ascended, as being filled with the Holy Ghost, sent from the throne in Heaven with His sevenfold gifts. Nothing less splendid fits into the teaching of the Church and of the Bible than that there is a real and energetic, though for the most part hidden, glory in every faithful member of Christ here in this world to-day. We need the contemplation of the present hidden glory to cheer

[1] Heb. xii. 22. [2] 1 Pet. i. 8; iv. 14.

us in striving for its full manifestation in the end. The reality and power of the present glory are too clearly expressed in the Bible and in the Fathers to be missed. For example, S. Paul writes thus: "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."[1] "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."[2]

S. Clement writes on this text: "By means of Christ we gaze steadfastly into the depths of Heaven; by His means the eyes of our hearts have been opened, and our darkened mind springs upward to His glorious Light. The Lord of all wills us to taste by Him of His immortal knowledge, for He is the outshining of His glory."

Through Him God's glory shines into every poor life that belongs to Him. And S. Paul speaks of Christians as not merely enlightened by Christ, but as becoming light itself: "Ye were darkness, now are ye light in the Lord."[3] And so the savages turned Christians in Central Africa instinctively called our missionary who died there in youth "The teacher with the light in his face."

But this splendour is given not merely to shine within us, but to shine out through us upon our surroundings. Nothing that the Christian does is to fade under darkness, but is to give out light, glory: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."[4] The glory is not mine, or of me; it is the Divine glory, but communicated to each member

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 6.
[2] 2 Cor. iii. 18.
[3] Eph. v. 8
[4] 1 Cor. x. 31.

of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, that in every thing he does or suffers he may carry it into the dark world, and so bear witness to the new world of light to which he belongs.

There is never a suggestion that this light must fade as we grow old. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1] The losses and infirmities which age brings are as it were the breaking of the pitchers by Gideon's army of deliverance, in order that the hidden lamps might shine out. S. Paul never speaks with more authority of light than when he appeals to Philemon as "Paul the aged, and now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ." In regard to the bodily decay which time and toil wrought in him, our Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore," he concludes, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities . . . for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, than am I strong."[2]

But how in particular does the mystery of Christ's glory touch our poor life in old age, which seems more truly expressed by S. Paul's "I bear in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus";[3] for we are sensible every day of advancing physical failure and loss of memory?

The Christian baptized into Christ is made one with Him in a sense that includes all that is His. All that is Christ's becomes the treasure of the Christian for ever. He is united to Christ in order to abide for ever in Christ. He is baptized into His precious death, into the glory of His resurrection and ascension. By

[1] Prov. iv. 18. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

every failure and sorrow of age he enters further into the fellowship of Christ's Sacred Passion, which is an eternal glory. Then there is the glory of being personally loved of God, frail as he is, accepted in the Beloved, the glory of being called now in his weakness "to know the love of God which passeth knowledge,"[1] Christ says to the Father in His prayer, "Thou hast loved (My disciples) as Thou hast loved Me,"[2] and again it is written, "having loved His own He loved them to the end,"[3] that is as far as love can go, with a love that fails not. And that gift of God's love, which is always *first*, empowers each penitent to rise and make return of grateful love. That response of the reconciled soul to the uncreated Lover, while it is the first and simplest movement of a Christian child to God, is also the Saint's last and highest attainment in this world: on love that suffers and dies with Christ, "the Spirit of glory and of God rests."[4]

And the glory of loving and being loved of God kindles a responsive glory of joy. The beatitude of God is infinite, because, in the mutual self-giving of the Blessed Trinity, He is Love; and He has made man in order that He may share with him in his measure the Divine beatitude. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,"[5] expresses His final purpose for His creature. But *already* in this stage of life on earth He gives us the substance of joy, when He gives us Himself, as He says, "We will come unto him and make our abode with him."[6] The Lord expressly gave to His disciples on the eve of His Passion the participation of His own joy: "These things have I said unto you that the joy which is Mine may be in you, and that your joy may

[1] Eph. iii. 19. [2] S. John xvii. 23. [3] S. John xiii. 1.
[4] 1 Peter iv. 14. [5] S. Matt. xxv. 21. [6] S. John xiv. 23.

be fulfilled."[1] Here is an illustration of this splendour from S. Clement in the days of the martyrs, and another from our own times. "We Christians," writes S. Clement, "having learnt the new blessings have the exuberance of life's morning prime in this youth which knows no old age, in which we, who are always growing to maturity in intelligence, are yet always young, always gentle, always new; for they must necessarily be new, who have become partakers of the new world." And of Bishop Kemper his biographer writes: "To complete the picture we have to add certain spiritual qualities, especially that Christian cheerfulness, that strain of childlike happiness, that was so winning in him. He kept the heart of a boy after the snows of more than sixty winters had descended on his head."

And the glory of Divine love and joy received awakes the glory of praise and thanksgiving. In our old selves we were nothing but darkness, but born again, and in Holy Communion feeding upon Christ Who is the Father's glory, now we have true glory to give to the Father, for in robes washed in the blood of the Lamb we present to Him His well-beloved Son with all His merits, His victories, His love. Our worship at the Altar is our recognition of the glory of the Word made Flesh, and our grateful love comes forth clothed in the sunshine of His Presence, to welcome and carry His glory to the highest as we present Him to the Eternal Father in our praise and thanksgiving. Every Psalm ends with its "*Gloria Patri*," in which we who have nothing of our own to give, lift up and offer to Him the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, Who is the "Brightness of the Father's glory."[2] Every "Gloria" brings us back to our fellowship with angels and archangels,

[1] S. John xv. 11. [2] Heb. i. 3.

and rekindles "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"[1] in our praise. And this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving that springs in the morning Eucharist is given to us to be a light that will go on shining—a river of light that is to run through every day in the praise of the Divine Office. The recitation of the Psalter at stated hours every day was a discipline of the Church to train men in the habit of praise at all times. S. Jerome, in a letter to S. Paula, speaks thus of country folk in Palestine: "The labourer, while he holds the handle of the plough, sings Alleluiah; the tired reaper employs himself in the Psalms; and the vine-dresser, while pruning the vines with his curved hook, sings something of David. These are our ballads in this part of the world, these are our love-songs." How naïvely this illustrates simple Christians' interpretation of S. Paul's great exhortation to a life of praise: "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."[2] But it is not only in words that the Christian praises God; he lives to praise Him also in everything that he does, and in everything that he suffers. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do," S. Paul bids us, "do all to the glory of God."[3] The Christ in us brings glory to the Father out of the least thing that we do for the love of God, and in His Name. Is there any reason to think that the glory of praise and thanksgiving must fade under the cloud of suffering and decay in age? No, S. Paul made all clouds shine with the joy of his love and thanksgiving; let all possible trials come, and he sees himself and his

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 4. [2] Eph. v. 18. [3] 1 Cor. x. 3.

flock "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."[1] Our Lord taught S. Peter that by his death he was to glorify God. And I know of a soul that in the act of dying said with his very last breath, "As long as I have any being I will praise the Lord."[2]

And then there is *a glory of perseverance.* A life that is lived in Christ does not surrender to weariness or discouragement. "For this cause we faint not," writes S. Paul, "but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."[3]

The Christian realizes Wordsworth's ideal of the "Happy Warrior":

> "Whose high endeavours are an inward light
> That makes the path before him always bright;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
> Looks forward, persevering to the last,
> From well to better, daily self-surpast."

S. Paul is confident that Christ Who began a good work in His flock at Philippi, will "perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."[4] He sees the Christian life as *our upward calling,* always to higher things. He anticipates no falling off; whatever ills flesh is heir to are only the material for victories for the new-born spirit that in Christ is "more than conqueror." Is not the child's instinctive expectation of glory justified and fulfilled in us, who in old age are taught to pray that God "would grant us according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the

[1] Rom. viii. 37. [2] Ps. cxlvi. 1.
[3] 2 Cor. iv. 16. [4] Phil. i. 6.

love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and may be filled with all the fulness of God ? "[1] The heart-sinking and fears of age are brushed aside as irrelevancies ; we claim our place in Christ, and possess already the eternal realities. " God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[2]

[1] Eph. iii. 16.

[2] Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6.

VII.

THE IMMENSITIES.

> "The giddy waves so restless hurled,
> The vexed pulse of this feverish world,
> He views and counts with steady sight
> Used to behold the infinite."—J. Keble.

In early days life was so full of its own immediate, ever-varying discoveries and invitations from every side to fresh interests, that we seldom caught a glimpse of the vast worlds that lie beyond the keen observation of our young senses. If ever at some crisis the idea of the end of time, of the infinite, of the Being of God, of the personality of the soul did present itself, it was a terror to us, and we made haste to take refuge in our homely surroundings, in what we could see, and test and measure by our grasp.

But to-day, when the busy years are left behind, and there is little in the scene of our present life to occupy us, new doors open to our contemplation, and thought is free to travel far in regions where it must travel alone, and from which it returns no longer in silent awe, but with praise.

A friend gives me a little book about the stars. I have never before found time to think much about them. For me they are the discovery of an old man's leisure to-day, and I am amazed. Here, for instance, are a few simple facts that awaken wonder in me. I learn that the distance of this earth from the sun, by

whose heat we live, is ninety-three million miles; an express train going at sixty miles an hour would take a hundred and eighty years for the journey. Again, the mass of stars in the Milky Way are about three hundred million times further from us than we are from the sun. Again, eighteen observatories are engaged in photographing the heavens, and their chart will probably present thirty million stars in position and degree of brightness. Again, the earth moves eighteen miles and a half per second, but light travels ten thousand times as fast. Once more, the sun-spot of February, 1905, was a thousand times as big as Europe.

It takes time to get any appreciable impression of forces, spaces, and movements, so great as these. The thought of them at once makes one feel one's individual insignificance. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it."[1] We remember Job's wonder and fear: "Behold the height of the stars, how high they are!"[2]

Science carries us into zones of speculation where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

"Le silence eternel de ces espaces m'effraie."[3]

As the years pass life grows less crowded with sensible interests; and we get more frequent glimpses of wonders that lie beyond, invisible, immeasurable, at which we tremble. But this gradual thinning of the scene of life by loss of objects and interests that are close to us, proves also a merciful discipline teaching us to look higher and deeper, for the invisible support we know we shall find beyond all the immensities of time, and space, and all the forces of created nature. Job could contemplate steadily the height of the stars, because he looked higher still: "Is not God in the height of Heaven?"

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 6. [2] Job. xxii. 12. [3] Pascal.

And seeking to know this central supreme mystery we find first that it has known us all along. "O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me: Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. . . . Thou art acquainted with all my ways. Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I go then from Thy Presence? If I climb up to Heaven Thou art there, if I go down to hell Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. . . . Yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day; the darkness and light to Thee are both alike. . . . I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. . . . How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them! . . . When I awake I am still with Thee."[1]

To discover the glory of the Creator of the universe is to discover a glory in which He wills us in our littleness to share. "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth! Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour."[2]

Here is a modern mind facing infinity in his thoughts: "Whence comes this wondrous impression of the

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 1 ff. [2] Ps. viii. 1 ff.

Infinite which is derived from infinitude itself, and has nothing that suggests the finite in it? It is in myself; it is more than myself; it appears to be everything, and myself nothing. I cannot eradicate it, or cloud it, or lessen it, or contradict it. It is in me; I did not put it there, and I only found it there because it was already there before I sought it. It remains the same, even when I do not think of it, and am thinking of other things. I find it again whenever I seek it, and it often suggests itself although I do not seek it. It does not depend on me; I depend on it. If I wander away it recalls me; it corrects me, it revises my opinion. . . . I find in my nature a something instinctive which is absolutely real, something which is within me, yet not of me; which is above me, yet which is in me even when I do not know it; something with which I am alone even as though it were myself, which is truly nearer to me than myself. This something, so near, so wonderful, yet impossible to understand, must needs be God. This it is which shows me, little by little, as my limitations will permit, such things as it is needful I should know. The same God Who gave me being gave me thought, for my being is in thought. . . . Thus all proceeds from Him, all comprehension, all comprehensibility, all being; there is nothing that is not of Him; we cannot understand or be understood save through Him."[1]

Time and grace work together for us as the years pass by, emptying us gradually of all confidence in the solace of the senses, and of our accidental surroundings. As far as the soul has learnt to renounce the world and self-love for God, it can dare to face the dreadful im-

[1] Fénelon, from "Fénelon, His Friends and His Enemies." By E. K. Sanders. Longmans, Green & Co.

mensities that open before us, because it has found in God that which includes all that is greatest, as well as that which is least in the universe. Immeasurable time, and space, and force, terrify us no longer, since in our Lord Jesus Christ we have come to know, love, and trust a power that is beyond those frozen deserts in which thought is lost—a power that surrounds, embraces, penetrates them all—God in Three Persons, the infinite Love.

And now, on the other hand, the view of our personal littleness no longer chills and discourages us, since we have found it embraced us in that love as safely and tenderly as the little children whom our Lord took in His arms to bless them. And further, that small faculty of love, our personality itself, begins to grow as it contemplates the infinite Love, and discovers that glorious infinity shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. For we love Him because He first loved us, and He bids us love one another as He loved us, Who said "As the Father loved Me so have I loved you, continue ye in My love."[1] To the humble seeker the abyss of Deity is no longer a fearful solitude, a desert where baffled thought is lost. In that love the contemplative soul finds a real fellowship with the infinite, finds its eternal Home, the very heart of God, is initiated into the mystery of the mutual love of the Blessed Trinity.

> "In Thy heart and wounded side,
> I am safe if I abide."

All the infinities are cherished there; but when I seek that open door that invites me, and enter in, I discover, not merely that there is room there for me besides, but it is as if all that is there was for me and

[1] S. John xv. 9.

my littleness: "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine."[1] He is not divided, but is all mine. And as I contemplate that mystery the splendour of it expands, for in Him I find all the Saints are cherished, and that all that God is is the possession of every Saint, and that all of them, a great multitude which no man can number, arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands—all of them as His and in Him, are a treasure for me. Welcomed in the wounded Heart of Christ the most unworthy finds himself the companion of all the blessed souls that ever found God—their companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. They are no longer a confusing crowd of unknown persons; He Who is my Beloved is the Light and Life, the joy and treasure of every one of them. Now the strangeness and emptiness of the Eternal and Infinite is gone. The Infinite is our Home, the Eternal Love is the treasure of each one of us.

S. Paul has learnt to face all the vastest forces of nature, the chilling heights and depths of thought, and is no longer afraid. Established in Christ, he tells us, "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"; and he is "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[2] The Apostle not only no longer shrinks from the thought of the dread infinities, but prays that his spiritual children "being rooted and grounded in love may be strengthened to apprehend with all Saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that they may be filled

[1] Cant. vi. 3. [2] Rom. viii. 37 ff.

with all the fulness of God."[1] Hence the Christian has learnt through the ages, on his way to his own country, to make his song of the eternal realities which are almost too deep and high for thought. "In mente habui æternos annos."[2] "I remembered Thine everlasting judgments, O Lord, and received comfort."[3]

"The current of things temporal," cries S. Augustine, "sweeps along. But like a tree over that stream has risen our Lord Jesus Christ. He willed to plant Himself as it were over the river. Are you whirled along by the current? Lay hold of the wood. . . . Lay hold upon Christ. For you He became temporal that you might become eternal. For He was so made temporal as to remain eternal. Join thy heart to the eternity of God, and thou shalt be eternal with Him."[4]

And so Faber sings in his hymn, "The Eternal Years,"

"How shalt thou bear the Cross that now
So dread a weight appears?
Keep quietly to God, and think
Upon the Eternal Years.

"Austerity is little help,
Although it somewhat cheers;
Thine oil of gladness is the thought
Of the Eternal Years.

"Brave quiet is the thing for thee,
Chiding thy scrupulous fears;
Learn to be real, from the thought
Of the Eternal Years.

"Thy Cross is quite enough for thee,
Though little it appears;
For there is hid in it the weight
Of the Eternal Years."

[1] Eph. iii. 17 ff. [2] Ps. xxvi. 6 (Vulg.). [3] Ps. cxix. 52.
[4] S. Aug. quoted by Abp. Alexander on the Epistles of S. John, p. 161.

"Death will have rainbows round it, seen
Through calm contrition's tears,
If tranquil hope but trims her lamp
At the Eternal Years."

It is joy to see how grace can grasp and appropriate the dread immensities of nature from which thought shrinks—how they become the food of the Christian's daily devotion.

"For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth: so great is His mercy also unto them that fear Him.

"Look how wide also the east is from the west: so far hath He set our sins from us.

"Thy mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the heavens: and Thy faithfulness unto the clouds.

"Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains: Thy judgments are like the great deep."[1]

Too late have I known Thee, O Infinite Goodness! Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new! Thou wert within me, and I went seeking Thee abroad; but now that I have found Thee, though late, suffer not, good Lord, that I ever leave Thee. Amen.[2]

"*One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all.* God alone is in heaven; God is all in all. Eternal Lord, I acknowledge this truth and I adore Thee in this sovereign and most glorious mystery. There is One God, and He fills heaven; and all blessed creatures, though they ever remain in their individuality, are, as the very means of their blessedness, absorbed in the fulness of Him Who is above all, and through all, and in all. If ever,

[1] Ps. ciii. 11 ff.
[2] Cf. S. Aug. Confessions, Bk. x. chap. xxvii.

through Thy grace, I attain to see Thee in heaven, I shall see nothing else but Thee, because I shall see all whom I see in Thee, and seeing them I shall see Thee. As I cannot see things here below without light, and to see them is to see the rays which come from them, so in that Eternal City *claritas Dei illuminavit eam, et lucerna ejus est Agnus*—the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. My God, I adore Thee now as the One Sole True Life and Light of the soul, as I shall know and see Thee to be hereafter, if by Thy grace I attain to heaven."[1]

[1] Card. Newman's "Meditations," pp. 587, 588.

VIII.

OCCUPATIONS AND INTERESTS PURSUED IN OLD AGE.

It is happy to observe not only the good humour with which aged Christians take the special mortifications and deprivations of their state, but the keenness of interest also with which they pursue to the last the work that remains within their power. Eadmer, in his "Life of S. Anselm," relates that during the last two years of his life, during which time his infirmities grew upon him, so that on a journey he had to be carried in a litter, he wrote a treatise "Concerning the Agreement of Foreknowledge, Predestination, and the Grace of God, with Free Will." When told that his end was near, he answered, "If His will be so, I shall gladly obey His will. But if He willed rather that I should yet remain amongst you, at least till I have solved a question which I am turning in my mind, about the origin of the soul, I should receive it thankfully, for I know not whether anyone will finish it after I am gone."

Latterly food became loathsome to him, but he put force on himself, and in this way "he dragged on life through half a year, gradually failing day by day in body, though in vigour of mind he was still the same as he used to be. So being strong in spirit, though but very feeble in the flesh, he could not go to his oratory

on foot; but from his strong desire to attend the consecration of the Lord's body, which he venerated with a special feeling of devotion, he caused himself to be carried thither every day in a chair. We who attended on him tried to prevail on him to desist, because it fatigued him so much; but we succeeded, and that with difficulty, only four days before he died."

With this narrative of the twelfth century, Dean Church compares Walton's account of the death-bed of Richard Hooker in the seventeenth. He notices in both cases the scul, vigorous to the very end, amid the decay of the body, and the gradual averseness to all food. "He did not beg," Walton writes, "a long life for any other reason but to live to finish his three remaining books of Polity; and then, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace." The Dean observes, "The calm, quiet, unexcited continuance in the usual rites and practices of a religious life, long familiar, and become part of every-day life; the comfort of Eucharist and Gospel history; the employment to the last moment of the subtle and inquisitive intellect on its congenial trains of abstruse thought, relating to the deep mysteries of both worlds, seen and unseen, and rendered more real in the face of death—Anselm revolving the origin of the soul, Hooker 'meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in Heaven—and oh, that it might be so on earth!'—all these details bring together, at the distance of so many ages, the two great religious thinkers, who outwardly were so different."

IX.

THE TEMPER AND OUTLOOK OF OLD AGE IN THE CHRISTIAN.

In Father Benson's later letters, one finds the note of patience with cheerfulness and thankfulness, but especially that of expectation. He writes to a friend in 1912:

"Cowley S. John, *Oct. 30th*, 1912.

"As for myself I have much cause for thankfulness in witnessing the growth of our Society's work, although I am quite shut by from external co-operation. I am quite well, but utterly incapable of joining in anything that is being done. 'All my bones are out of joint,' but while Christ is reigning at the right hand of God I cannot say that 'my heart is like melting wax.' Rather the progress of Christ's work all over the world must strengthen one's heart to praise God as the end draws near.

"I am not capable of doing anything for myself, but it is a great pleasure to have the Brothers round me to keep me going.

"I hope my writing is legible. It is almost impossible for me to read ordinary printed books. I sit over the fire, and happily that which I once would most need to read is in the Psalms, in very familiar words. I am able to go to the daily Celebration, which we have in our own church every morning at eight o'clock. Other

services in church are of little avail: I am too deaf to take in what is read.

"I hope that soon I shall find the eyes of the blind opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. It is a great comfort at my age to have no pains.

"One knows that the waiting time cannot be long. How joyous will be the meeting with those who have gone before!

"We old people owe a constant debt to those who help us on the way with their prayers, and we can return the debt in prayer for them."

Again:

"MISSION HOUSE, *Dec. 31st*, 1912.

"Thank you for your greeting; the year closes, but the forth-shining of Divine Love is ever new, and His blessing everlasting.

"Ever yours in Him,

"R. M. BENSON."

An aged Religious wrote thus to his sister grown old likewise in religion:

". . . It was forty years ago that we entered, you and I, upon a new state of life's work that we are looking back upon now from its closing days. As to the past, our hope is in the mercy of God.

"As to the present and what may be to come, I find cheer in the last chapter of the life of dear Bishop King, of Lincoln. Shortly before he died he wrote to a friend: 'Perhaps this is our greatest reward, to see the rising generation doing better than we have done. . . . There is, I think, a widespread feeling that society has become too conventional or artificial, and many people are

looking for a more simple, and so more real and true, way of living.'

"Conservative though he was, he seems to have felt that some good, as yet hardly realized by him, was being worked out by the rising generation, and he was anxious not by any reserve on his part to check the good that was on its way. 'One must try,' he wrote, 'in one's last years not to be a hindrance to anything that is good, and to hand on the good of the old days.'

"How inevitably every form of life and service tends in turn to become unreal, except while it lives with the life of God. You and I have seen conventionality forsaken by generous founders who set forth with few companions to discover a new and simpler life in the love of God as Christ might lead them. Are we still in their company, though far behind them in the quest? If so may we not share the encouragement—the joy of seeing the rising generation doing better than we have done?

"As for what remains for us of this life, does disappointment seem sometimes to mark every step of our journey down hill? Dr. Pusey shall answer for us. An old friend and fellow-worker of his wrote for me the following recollection of him: 'I was speaking to him one day of my brother, and of the trial to him of *constant disappointment.* Dr. Pusey said, Tell him you know one (he meant himself) whose whole life has been disappointment, yet he can get up every morning, and hope to work for God that day.'"[1]

The temper in which one accepts change in the circumstances of life at a time when one is more than ever attached to the past, and longs for quietness, is a great test of Christian character in old age. Father

[1] From the Preface to "The Interior Life." Mowbray.

Benson, forgetting himself and trusting in God, shows the light in which he regards such disturbing revolutions. He is writing to a friend who after many years spent in a pastoral charge, and marked by signal blessing, is obliged, through infirmity, to resign a very happy life's work, and to finish out his later years in retirement unemployed. "I hope you will find your new home," he says, "a very happy one. As we move from one place to another, it is no disloyalty to the past to feel that God's unchangeable love is meeting us with fresh tokens of His Fatherly care amid new surroundings. The happiness of the past must grow into the happiness of the future, and in all, both past and future, we find the joyous fellowship of the Holy Ghost, the presence of Christ in all the sympathy of His Humanity, and the power of the Eternal Father. Changes come, and they come just when they are most helpful to us. We might arrange for ourselves changes which would still leave us on the same level. God arranges our changes so that we may step upward, and come nearer to Himself. And when there is any steep step to take he will reach His arms down and lift us up, and set our feet upon the Rock."

J. Ruskin thus contrasts the temper of youth and age:

"Between youth and age there will be found differences of seeking which are not wrong, nor of false choice in either, but of different *temperament;* the youth sympathizing more with the *gladness, fullness,* and *magnificence* of things, and the grey hairs with their *completion, sufficiency,* and *repose.* And so, neither condemning the delights of others, nor altogether distrustful of our own, we must advance, as we live on, from what is *brilliant* to what is *pure,* and from what

is *promised* to what is *fulfilled*, and from what is our *strength* to what is our *crown*; only observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is *dislike* and not *affection*. For . . . it is evident that in whatever we altogether dislike, we see not all; that the keenness of our vision is to be tested by the expansiveness of our love."[1]

Of James Martineau his biographer has given a vivid picture. He speaks of the "young old man," more fleet of foot in climbing the hills that he loved than companions who did not number half his years, the most sympathetic and courteous of controversialists, with a rare power of seeing things as others saw them, yet still keeping to his own standpoint . . . looking out on the world with "a certain awe-strickenness before the mysteries of the universe," but still clinging to the fundamental faith in the divine order of the world. "It would be nothing less than a heinous sin in me to become superannuated!" he wrote when he was in his ninety-second year.

Mère Angélique, Abbess of Port Royal, herself being ill at the time, said one day to a sick man, who complained about the absence of the nursing sister, "So, my dear sister, when we want something, and on calling nobody answers, let us just content ourselves and think that the little maid is gone to market, and wait with patience till she returns." The Sister profited so well by this advice that she never afterwards complained though before she had been sufficiently exacting. But when anything was wanting she said cheerfully, "My Mother, the little maid is gone to market to-day!"

When on her death-bed she said to a nun who un-

[1] J. Ruskin, "Mod. Painters," Vol. 2, sec. 1, chap. 4.

advisedly began to speak to her on some business, "My work is done now: it is time to keep the Sabbath."

At a time when Port Royal was in great straits, one of the Sisters said, "I do not think there is anything in the world that can give one such lively pleasure as to assist those who are in want. And yet perhaps after all there is one still more elevated, which is to have given away everything, and to afford the same pleasure to other children of God, by receiving what our good Lord chooses to send us by their hands."

The following passage is from the "Life of Bishop Wordsworth," of Lincoln, in reference to his last illness:[1]

"After a restless night, the cry of his little granddaughter—an infant of a few weeks old—was heard from the adjoining room. 'Is that dear Baby?' the Bishop asked; 'let me see her.' She was brought to his bedside, and her mother asked him to bless her, which, having done, he quickly added, 'Now she must bless me.' Presently he asked, 'Has she done it?' 'No,' the mother answered, 'she can't speak yet; but,' guiding the baby-hand to his forehead as she spoke, 'see, she says it by my mouth.' Surely there was something more than the wandering of a dying and enfeebled man in this instinctive movement of the mind which threw itself back, after a long life on the innocency of childhood."

Father Stanton, in his last illness, writing to Father Russell, says that on his account the second floor of the Clergy House had to be converted into a hospital, and continues: "I said to one who came to see me, 'Isn't it a great fuss and to-do to drag back into health a poor old fellow of seventy-three, who, if they succeed,

[1] "Christopher Wordsworth," by J. H. Overton and E. Wordsworth, p. 357.

can only live a few years longer?' But the answer was: 'That's all very well, but we can't let you slip through, if it can be helped.'

"Now I am in the house where I was born, and old experiences of sixty-eight years ago are renewed, for then at 8.30 p.m. the drawing-room door was opened, and nurse appeared and said, 'It is time for Master Arthur to go to bed.' Master Arthur got up and went out, sulkily, to the room opposite the nursery, was put to bed, and tucked in. To-day nurse appears at 9.45 at the drawing-room door, and says, 'It is time for Father Stanton to go to bed.' Father Stanton gets up sleepily, follows nurse to the room opposite the nursery, gets to bed, and is tucked in. So history repeats itself."[1]

[1] "Life of Father Stanton," by the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell.

X.

A PENITENT.

"NEW COLLEGE GARDEN, OXFORD, *October 3rd*, 1873.

"A MIDDLE-AGED stranger is sitting here alone, and is thinking over the trials, sorrows, passions, and aspirations of young men (*suspiria juvenum*). How little we understand or sympathize with them, when we ourselves have outgrown them. And this lack of sympathy, what a token it is of our own moral poverty and faded ideals.

"How beautiful this garden lawn is, shut in by high chestnut trees—gloomy at this moment, as a cloud passes overhead, and the gust brings down a shower of dead leaves that float across the open; but lovely now, because the warm sunshine breaks out again, and glorifies every faded yellow leaf, every bare branch, and now a bastion of the old crumbling city wall. Rooks fly above, and a wren is playing all by itself in a standard rose-bush. Everything is full of beauty and gladness, because God makes His sun to rise upon all His creatures.

"So God makes His mercy to rise upon our penitence, our faded and stained lives, the promise of our youth that was not fulfilled, the failure that we mourn without despair, as we look up to God for forgiveness. Penitence lets God into His garden; He comes and finds

winter there, but His presence brings the breath of a new April, and even of a time of fruit, making us rich with a treasure we had failed to work for. A robin is singing now. . . . a jackdaw gossips to his neighbour. . . . The sunshine lies right across the lawn. . . . 'Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. . . . In the tender mercy of God, O my soul, thou art happy."—Found written in an old notebook of an early Postulant at Cowley.

XI.

ASCENDENCE.

"They will go from strength to strength, and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion."

STEADILY ascendent—so the life and old age of the distinguished surgeon, Sir James Paget, are characterized in the conclusion of an address by Stephen Paget, F.R.C.S., upon his father. He is speaking of the last period of his life, the six years of retirement at Park Square West :—

"In this period he learned the full hardship of retirement—the inevitable time when the callers are none of them patients, and the letters are all of them advertisements, and other men do all the science, and get all the practice. The more success a man has enjoyed in our profession, the more he dreads the loss of all work, all influence, all engagements—the mornings without a patient, the afternoons blank, the evenings without anything that must be done. And consider how much he must give up, who loves work passionately, and has a keen delight in his own energy and influence, and in social life. But Paget had to give up also everything : the companionship of his wife, and the sight of his friends ; the very power to stand, or to write his own name, or to speak above a whisper. These last two years of his life are nothing short of a miracle ; they cannot easily be reconciled with any natural interpretation of things. He never once grumbled ; he seemed to become, so far as it was possible, every day more gracious and more

loving; he surrendered every vestige of his old life with a sort of courteous, half-humorous gentleness. So long as he could hear a note of it, he delighted in music; so long as he could see a word of them, he read his books of devotion; so long as he could be lifted into his carriage, he would go to do a kindness to somebody. The picture of these last years effaces all other remembrance of him; this picture of him when he was helpless, silent, utterly enfeebled, unable to move from his chair; always patient, always full of divine courtesy and loving kindness; waiting till he was free of the trouble of living; and refusing, when the end came, even to admit that he was glad it had come.

"I began with this thesis, that Sir James Paget's life was singularly complete, singularly happy, and steadily ascendent. Let me end by saying that the greatest of these is the last of them. In all things the longer he lived the higher he went. In his religion and in his social life; in work-time and in holiday-time; in his opinions, sympathies, and tastes; in every thought, word, and deed he attained the wider outlook, the clearer vision, the more exhilarating air, the brighter sunshine, the whole delightful happiness of being high up. Then, highest of all, in the time of his infirmity, he left behind him every pleasure, and every honour, and quietly took the hard and solitary path that led him to that consummate achievement of his life—a perfect old age."

Sir James Paget died in his eighty-fifth year.

> "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new lights through chinks that time has made.
> Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
> As they draw near to their eternal home:
> Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view
> That stand upon the threshold of the new."—WALLER.

XII.

GRACIOUSNESS.

We look for a special graciousness in aged people because we have so often found it there. More than others they are at leisure to soothe and sympathize. Experience of many years has taught them the largeness of the goodness of God, His generosity, and the imperfection of all others, even of those who mean always well. In God they learn to look beyond imperfection, and recognize that though they see it everywhere it is never the end in God's purpose for anyone. They themselves, like the rest of us, have failed in their time, and made their mistakes; and God has forgiven all; and so they are learning not to dwell upon imperfection, but to be always looking through it for the perfection of God, Whose mercy is over all His works; and in God to treat the imperfection of others as He in His generosity has treated it in themselves, that is, to forgive it—to show mercy.

It is not merely that to save themselves trouble they overlook our bad manners. It is rather that they have so long carried the weight of their own imperfections, and day after day God has met them at sunrise with His mercy, and the joy of a new morning.

> "New every morning is the love
> Our waking and uprising prove."

And so in the comfort of that grace which has forgiven them so often and so nobly, they can cheerfully carry the mercy they are daily receiving into their welcome to all the other imperfect people they meet. Their forgiveness is full of cheer to us because we feel in it the generosity of God which they have experienced, and carry within their hearts, and are kind enough to share with us. They cannot contain their joy of God's mercy received; it must gather us in too, and their welcome to us redoubles their joy. "He that showeth mercy with cheerfulness." Another may show us mercy and yet leave us the more depressed:

> "Only Heaven
> Means crowned, not vanquished, when it says 'Forgiven.'"

But this cheerfulness in showing mercy cannot be taken as a matter of course. It is divine, and cannot be separated from the charity of God. Father Benson supposes that S. Paul in those words, "He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness," had some one in his mind who had time upon his hands to be generally exercised in works of mercy, and adds, "Oh, what a blessed calling! But how many might enter upon it with delight, and soon grow weary! Giving out joy to the suffering is apt to be very exhausting to the joyousness of those who carry on such a work, especially when the return is not one of reciprocal brightness, and all consolation seems to be given in vain. It is therefore a very needful warning to look for the gift of the Spirit in the joyousness with which the work of mercy is done. Then, indeed, the joyousness will multiply itself by the continued exercise. He that shows mercy must not look for the return of human gratitude, but for the sustaining, sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, the oil of gladness,

whereby, if we would cheer others, we shall ourselves be abundantly cheered."[1]

But he that showeth mercy is not only the able-bodied man who can devote himself to works of mercy as his vocation. Accidental opportunities for the exercise of this ministry occur in every life, and perhaps oftener than we are aware. I have read of some one that "A little tact on his part, a little of that mercifulness towards the absurd, which Cardinal Newman attributes to the true gentleman, might have worked wonders."

The three passages that follow are taken from S. Adamnan's "Life of S. Columba," and are added because, with a certain humour and spiritual gladness of their own, they illustrate the grace which we are considering—a grace that belongs to all the Christian ages, but will gain some distinctive colour and character from every age. The culture of a perfect soul in the fifth century will have its unmistakable likeness to Christ, but with originality of its own, distinct from the spiritual culture of the twentieth.

THE PROPHECY OF S. COLUMBA CONCERNING ERNENE.[2]

. . . "The blessed man while staying for some months in the midland part of Ireland was pleased to go to visit the Brethren who were dwelling in the Clonoensian Monastery of S. Ceran (Clonmacnoise). And when they heard of his arrival, all of them from the little fields about the monastery, together with those found

[1] Father Benson's "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," xii. 8.

[2] From the "Life of S. Columba of Iona," by Adamnan, translated from the Latin by Wentworth Huyshe. G. Routledge & Son, London.

congregated within it, following with the greatest alacrity the Abbot Alither, set out with one accord to meet S. Columba as if he were an angel of the Lord; humbly bowing with faces to the earth at the sight of him, he was kissed by them with all reverence, and singing hymns and praises they conduct him with all honour to the church. And binding together a canopy of poles they had it carried by four men, walking equally apart about the Saint as he went, lest, be it understood, the holy and aged Columba should be jostled by the crowding of the throngs of the Brethren.

"In the same hour a certain servant lad, very downcast in mien and attire, and not as yet pleasing to his elders, hiding himself as much as he could, came behind that he might secretly touch even the fringe of the cloak with which the blessed man was clad, and, if he could do so, without his knowing or feeling it. But this was not hid from the Saint, for what he could not with his bodily eyes see done behind him he perceived with the eyes of his soul. Wherefore he stops suddenly, and stretching out his hand behind him takes hold of the boy's neck, and drawing him sets him before him. And while all those who are standing round say, 'Send him away! Send him away! Why dost thou detain this wretched and naughty lad?' the Saint, on the other hand, utters from his pure heart these prophetic words: 'Suffer it to be, brethren, suffer it to be now.' But to the much trembling boy he says: 'O son, open thy mouth and put out thy tongue.' Then the boy, thus commanded, opening his mouth, with much trembling, put out his tongue, and the Saint, stretching forth his holy hand, earnestly blessing it, thus prophetically speaks, saying: 'Although this boy may now seem to you despicable, and very worthless,

yet let no one despise him for that. For from this hour not only will he not displease you, but he will greatly please you; and he will increase by degrees from day to day in good conduct and the virtues of the soul; wisdom also and prudence shall be increased in him more and more from this day, and great will be his progress in this your community; his tongue also shall be gifted by God with wholesome doctrine and eloquence.'

"This was Ernene, son of Crasen, afterwards famous and very much noted among all the Churches of Ireland."

OF A CERTAIN SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION SENT BY THE HOLY MAN TO THE MONKS ON THEIR WAY BACK, WEARY FROM HARVEST TOIL.

"Among these manifestations of prophetic spirit it does not seem out of place to commemorate also in our little record a certain spiritual consolation which the Monks of S. Columba felt on one occasion from his spirit meeting them in the way. For once, as the Brethren, after harvest work, returning to the monastery in the evening, and arriving at that place which is called in Scotic Culeilne, midway between the western plain of the island of Iona and our monastery, they seemed each one to feel within himself something wonderful and unusual, which, however, they dared not speak of the one to the other. And so for some days, in the same place and at the same evening hour, they perceived it. But in those days S. Baithene was the superintendent of labours among them, and one day he spoke thus to them, saying, 'Now, Brothers, if ye unexpectedly experience anything unusual and wonderful in this

place, half-way between the harvest-field and the monastery, you ought to declare it, each one of you.'

"Then one of them, a senior, says: 'According to thy order I will tell thee what has been shown to me in this place; for in these days past, and even now, I perceive some fragrance of a marvellous odour, as if of all flowers collected into one; and also a certain burning as of fire, not painful but as it were soothing; and besides a certain unaccustomed and incomparable joy spread abroad in my heart, which of a sudden consoles me in a wonderful way, and so greatly gladdens me that I can remember sadness no more. Aye! and the load, albeit heavy, which I am carrying on my back from this place until we come to the monastery, is so much lightened, how, I know not, that I do not feel that I am bearing any burden.'

"What more shall I say? So all the harvest workers one by one declare, each for himself, that they had felt exactly as this one of them who had first spoken, and one and all on bended knees besought S. Baithene that he would let them know, ignorant as they were, the cause and origin of that wondrous consolation which he himself felt just as the rest perceived it. To whom, thereupon, he gave this answer, saying, 'Ye know that our senior, Columba, mindful of our toil, thinks anxiously about us, and grieves that we come to him so late; and by reason that he comes not in body to meet us, his spirit meets our steps, and that it is which so much consoles and makes us glad.' And hearing these words, still kneeling, with great joy and with hands spread out to heaven, they venerate Christ in the holy and blessed man."

THE HOLY MAN'S AGREEABLE FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PROPHECY CONCERNING ANOTHER MATTER ALSO, WHICH, ALTHOUGH OF MINOR IMPORTANCE, IS NOT, I THINK, ONE ON WHICH THERE SHOULD BE SILENCE.

"At another time, when the Saint was living in the Isle of Iona, calling one of the Brethren to him, he thus addresses him: 'On the third day from this now dawning, thou must keep a look-out in the western part of the isle, sitting on the seashore; for from the northern region of Ireland a certain guest, a crane, driven by the winds through long circling flights, will arrive, very weary and fatigued, after the ninth hour of the day; and its strength almost exhausted, it will fall and lie before thee on the shore, and thou wilt take care to lift it up kindly, and carry it to a neighbouring house, and there wilt hospitably harbour it, and attend to it for three days and three nights, and carefully feed it; at the end of the three days, refreshed, and unwilling to sojourn longer with us, it will return with fully-regained strength to the sweet region of Ireland whence it originally came. And I thus earnestly commend it to thee for that it came from the place of our own father-land.'

"The Brother obeys, and on the third day, after the ninth hour, as commanded, he awaits the coming of the expected guest; and when it comes he raises it from the shore where it fell; carries it, weak as it was, to the hospice; feeds it in its hunger. And to him, on his return to the monastery in the evening, the Saint, not by way of inquiry, but of statement, says: "God bless thee, my son, because thou hast well attended our stranger guest; and it will not tarry long in exile, but after three days will return to its country.' And

just as the Saint predicted the event also proved. For having been harboured for three days, raising itself on high by flight from the ground in presence of its ministering host, and considering for a little while its course in the air, it returned across the ocean to Ireland, in a straight line of flight, on a calm day."

XIII.

JOY.

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION CHANGES THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE.

If the coming of Christ into human history has changed its force and direction, it must be because He has brought the true ideal, and the power to realize it, to one saved man after another. The soul, new-born in Christ, is a new creation, a world of infinite new and happy possibilities. To the believer in Christ, life is no longer that pathetic drama of infancy, growth, and decrepitude, the contemplation of which weaned Gautama for ever from all love of it. But life has become to him *Christ*; whatever its circumstances may be, life signifies to him the same thing that it signifies to Christ on the throne of Heaven, for by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word and sacraments he realizes a vital interchange; as he is become Christ's, so Christ has become his. In himself he is nothing, as before, but finds completeness in Christ, and having Christ, he has all that is Christ's; "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."[1] To the believer, life on earth is the merciful opportunity of ever-deepening penitence and renewal, the splendid opportinuty of a growing fellowship with Christ in doing the works of Christ. He uses the faculties of

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

soul and body, no longer in their own feebleness, and to gratify their own ever-conflicting cravings, but now, in the power of Christ, who has come to reign in him, and to gather and employ all the forces of his nature in one undivided energy of love. The history of individual Christians attests the reality and the majesty of this change in many ways; one of these ways is the birth of Joy *where there is nothing else in the world to account for it but the Presence of Christ.*

As an example of this change, let us take an instance as low in the scale of human fortunes as possible. Father Callaway, of S. Cuthbert's Mission, South Africa, writes thus of a Kafir communicant, entirely uneducated, aged, alone, poor, and in sickness: "My thoughts run often to Nofamile Noholoza just now. I suppose it is because he is ill, and I, too, happen to be *hors de combat.* When I saw him he was sitting on a goat skin wrapped in a coloured blanket outside his hut. He did not tell me that he wanted anything; it was only some days after my visit that I heard quite accidentally that he was very poor and had nothing. . . . He is an old man living at Gqaqala, one of the outstations of this parish. For years he has regularly made his Communion at our monthly visits, but beyond this I did not know much of him. I do not even remember whether he is a convert of recent years, or whether I found him here as a Christian.

"Hearing that he was very ill I walked over to his kraal from our priest's hut; finding him as I said above. I sat down by his side and asked to hear about his sickness. 'I am ill,' he said, 'but it is the will of God I should be ill, and the will of God is good: it is the only good thing. God is the only living One, and we all have life from Him.' I told him that with this faith

he need not be afraid, he could not be overcome, and he answered, ' How can Satan overcome when he himself is already overcome by our Lord when He rose from the dead ? ' (I felt that there was nothing in his words of the self-assurance which jars upon one, but simply a real confidence in our Blessed Lord's atonement.) I then read the gospel for the day and talked about it to him. It was the warning against over-anxiety, pointing to the birds of the air and the flowers. As I spoke I was wondering how much the old man was understanding. He had never learnt to read a line, and knew nothing except what he had heard in instructions and sermons, but he had evidently responded to the grace of the Sacraments, and here was the secret of his understanding. Nofamile waited till I had finished, and then said, ' I am a fool ' (a man of no understanding) ' and a corpse ' (meaning a dying man), ' but even I can understand these words ; they are beautiful words, words of life . . . the treasures of the world do not help us . . . how can they help us ? I have nothing. I trust in God alone.' Perhaps it was more the presence of the man than the actual words that impressed me so deeply."

Later, Father Callaway wrote, " I must tell you one more word about Nofamile. Br. John went up to the place where he lives for a meeting, and started with the preacher to see a sick person. Their way led past Nofamile's kraal, and then the brother, who had never seen him before, saw a little old shrunken man sitting outside on a stone, whom they saluted and passed on. On their return a thick, cold mist came on, but as they approached Nofamile's kraal they heard him singing, sitting outside on the stone as before. They listened and heard a few of the words of his song, which were

to this effect: 'A child has come into the world. The child has no sin, but comes among us sinners. He comes for our sake; He comes to His friends, and His friends receive Him not,' etc.

"I found out the other day that one of our preachers some forty miles away was a son of his, and asked him about his father. It was evident that the son had a great reverence for him, and he told me that it was a frequent habit of Nofamile to go out on to the veld at night to 'pray to God.'" Another letter adds: "I visited Nofamile to-day, and hope to celebrate at his kraal to-morrow morning. I found the old man sitting outside the same hut, on the same goat skin, as at my first visit two years ago. He is less able to get about, but more unconquerably joyful than ever. He has hardly any eyesight left, and yet his face looks quite radiant." Father Callaway adds at another time, "Nofamile came tottering up with the help of his stick to make his Communion this morning. After the service he came to our hut, and began by saying that he never thought that he should meet me again in this world, but—he pointed up with a smile on his face to the world where he really seems to be living. After breakfast we had a meeting with the men about payment for the new church, for which each man had been assessed at 7s. 6d. To our great surprise Nofamile went up to the Chief and put a sovereign in his hand as his contribution. Where he had got it from is a mystery, as he is known to have nothing, and is consequently excused all hut-tax by the Government, as well as Church assessments. Possibly he had been given it by one of the young men of the kraal who had worked for it at the gold-fields."

Here is a life as low in its circumstances as you could well find, and here is the mystery which changes all

things, the Christ by the Word and Sacraments coming to the man as he goes through his vale of tears, and leaving him radiant within, while the external gloom and sorrow remain. Here is joy in the Lord in a life emptied of every other element of joy—joy associated with humblest penitence, with liberality abounding out of deep poverty, with a habit of frequent communion with God alone on the mountain and in the Sacrament, and with manners cheerful, gracious, and simple: joy in such companionship attests the mystery of the Incarnation—Christ coming into the individual soul that welcomes Him, and changing it into His own likeness. The old Kafir communicant singing in his solitude through wintry weather the song of the Child without sin born to save, may well awaken us to welcome Him better who once came to His own and His own received Him not. But the welcome of a great joy in the Lord comes only from hearts established in great love and great penitence.

From the same source flowed the invincible joy of S. Catherine of Siena. "She was naturally an optimist. 'Is not sadness the worst of all sins?' she wrote a few years later to Neri di Lomdoccio, whose supersensitive nature was too strongly tinged with melancholy. But Catherine's extreme cheerfulness was by no means merely natural. It was founded on the idea that God demands of us, not absolute, but attempted perfection; that He does not require of the soul entirely to eradicate a single fault, but to attempt to eradicate it with all its powers. 'God does not ask a perfect work, but infinite desire.' Consequently there can be no discouragement, even for those naturally pessimistic. For all God asks is that each should do his best. . . . Every event in life was sacramentalized,

for each was the outcome of the will of the Divine Lover. With S. Teresa, S. Catherine could exclaim, "My God, You know everything, You can do everything—and You love me!' Did a friend fail her, or an enemy injure her, she did not fail herself in any mission entrusted to her by Almighty God—her serene confidence, her sunny gaiety never faltered. Her understanding leapt to the conclusion of the whole matter: 'All the way to Heaven is Heaven, for He has said, I am the Way.'" Again she delighted to recall "the Lord's gracious promise to her: 'My daughter, think on Me and I will think on thee.' Unspeakable was Catherine's joy in pondering these words, which she understood to mean that in keeping her heart fixed on God alone she need feel no anxiety as to her own future salvation or as to any earthly thing. This virtue of hope was the mainspring of the courage which inspired her to carry out her life's great work."[1]

[1] "Life of S. Catherine of Siena," by C. M. Antony, pp. 28, 33.

XIV.

A SECRET.

It is wonderful to think of the mystery of any human soul, and of the secret ways of access that it has to the centre of all being—ways which are not open to the theological faculty of any university. Anyone can reason or discourse of the Absolute, or of the being of God. The world is full of theological treatises; all can read them who will. The notions about God that they contain are common property. They are scientifically arranged by theologians in a wonderful order. But I have little learning or time to avail myself of such treasures. I rejoice that you have both. Yet there are surprising avenues to knowledge still open to the simple.

One day a very old man was making his painful way round the cloister garth, thinking of God, or, perhaps, unsatisfied with any thoughts about God, looking up to Him, seeking God Himself. On stepping out of the cloister's shadow on to the sunny lawn, the lovely evening sky seemed to welcome him like an embrace, and awoke in his soul a strange sense of expectation. Under such a sky he could laugh at all his pains, as he felt how near God is to the soul that seeks Him. But suddenly he found himself arrested, and the sense of expectance grew keen. He stood still, gazing at a cluster of Agapanthus lily; it was, as it were, a full

orchestra of mystic trumpets lifted up to sound together a blast of spiritual praise. Every separate trumpet, blue as the skies between showers in April, seemed to shout God's praise in the gladness of the sunshine. The old man's eyes were fixed upon one of a cluster of clarion-shaped blossoms; the lovely curve from the delicate throat to the ever-widening mouth of each little trumpet was irresistibly beautiful—and the colour! the inexpressible joy of it!

But the aged man was no longer contemplating all this with natural delight; he stood still, and was looking through all that was before him—looking within and upward. It was the beauty of God he saw at last; it had touched the little plant first, and now the Agapanthus lived in the beauty and joy of God, and was able by the splendour of its praise to lift the beholder by grace of the Holy Spirit to God Himself, Who is Love, and the uncreated loveliness—the source and aim of every creature's beauty, joy, and desire. He forgot the beauty of the flower now, as the flower was self-forgotten. It was God Himself Whose beauty he contemplated, and it was the little South African lily that had led him to the wonderful discovery. For this he thanks God, and never passes the place now but he remembers the mystery of yesterday, and the inexpressible secret that the little flower silently led him to, and then was willing to be forgotten. Doubtless, through all time in prehistoric Africa the Agapanthus never failed to praise God, as it does to-day in our cloister garth. Then the lion was free to range over Table Mountain, and the highest form of man was the ancestor of the Hottentot, or the Bushman. There, indeed, was hidden the image of God—the lost image; but how many ages must the little flower wait before

it could communicate its secret to the first baptized African native, and set his soul on fire with love and praise, as it did that day for the old missionary in the cloister garth ?

XV.

DAFFODILS.

One aged friend wrote lately to another: "I have been laid up for four months, and after nineteen Sundays away from church was able to go to S. Barnabas' to-day. Returning, I rested, and took out a book of meditations on the Ten Virgins, in which I found an old letter from you written in March, 1896, twenty-one years ago, in which you thanked us for some daffodils we had sent you, and spoke of loving some flowers '*as one loves the dearest and best persons.*' Then I opened the book and came upon a passage that is a cheer to me:

"'When we get old how uninteresting we shall become. But uninteresting to whom? Never to Christ, Who died for each of us. Growing old is not decay—mere failure of life. It is life prolonged for the highest purpose; the object of growing old is to grow in love—to learn at last to exercise that gift of God's love shed abroad in the hearts of members of Christ by the Holy Ghost—a gift which in our youth perhaps we had hardly discovered. Our interest in one another, young or old, is that gift of God that is in each of us, that new life that does not grow old.'"

To whom the other replied: "Our life of twenty years ago so soon gets buried, grown over, and forgotten, that it is a cheer when a friend happens to

dig up some little grain of forgotten blessing of past years. It reminds one that those treasures of past kindness and truth buried long ago, out of sight, out of mind, are no more dead than are the crocuses and daffodils that were our joy last March, but of which there is not a trace left above ground in our garden to-day. Old age is naturally uninteresting to the new generation that cannot conceive that it ever was young. But our thoughts venture to travel further, and find a wider world of sympathies than that visible world of to-day that surrounds us.

"'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place from one generation to another.

"'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made.

"'Thou art God from everlasting and world without end.'

"The world to which we belong is not that of any one generation, but the eternal world, that is, God Himself, in Whom we live and move and have our being—a world in which our youth, and all that we really are, all that God has ever loved in us, survives. 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'[1] That thought makes one content to find oneself forgotten by a generation that only knows us as old, faded, and uninteresting. If the silence and stillness of age in us means that we are learning gladly to die to self, S. Paul says of us, 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear (be manifested) then shall ye also appear (be manifested, R.V.) with Him in glory'[2]

"That thought sends me back to the South African

[1] St. John iv. 16. [2] Col. iii. 3, 4.

veld, where, after the burning summer the face of the earth lies parched and brown. Every living thing seems dead. There is nothing to be seen but dried up thorn bushes and dead earth. And then the rains come at last, and in a few hours there is a flush of fresh green here and there, and in a week or two the wonderful and beautiful life hidden under ground appears, and miracles are wrought.

"A friend said to me at Capetown soon after I arrived there, 'You must come for a walk with me on the Flats in about a fortnight Then you will find the ground everywhere, as far as you can see, as if a rainbow had been spilt upon the earth.' Soon after I saw just what he promised. And so the symbol of the new life was *manifested* to me there year after year—life appearing out of what seemed death, life that was there all the time, but hidden. If we are only old and uninteresting it is so to the world which s passing away moment by moment. To God, Who made each of us for Himself, we are not uninteresting. And what we are to Him that is what we really are by His grace, and that we are in Him for ever. If our life is hid with Christ in God, however silently the empty years pass, we shall grow in humility in that secret place; our stillness will be full of happiness because full of love. Then we can laugh a little when alone to find ourselves of less and less account in the world, for *he that loveth dwelleth in God and God in Him,* and the soul that dwelleth in God must be ever growing in love, for God is Love."

XVI.

THE BEAUTY OF GOD.

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky;
> So was it when I was a child,
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall be old,
> Or let me die:
> For I would wish my days to be
> Linked each to each by natural piety."

It is worth while, when Wordsworth's familiar verse runs through our thoughts, to notice what exactly the effect is that he expects a transcendently beautiful scene in nature to produce. It is not a quickened intelligence, or any loftier moral sentiment, that the visionary glory of the rainbow kindles in him when it is presented to his view, but something quite different, which he calls "*natural piety*"—a profound movement of wonder and worship, of religion, or, we might say, of the love of God, of desire of the vision of God, or of delight in the Beauty of God. And this religious emotion he regards, not as a gift belonging mainly to our tenderer years, but as a permanent endowment belonging to them all, and happily linking youth with age.

A passage in the "Excursion" illustrates this religious effect of exceptionally sublime scenes in nature. It tells of an aged peasant overtaken by a storm among the

hills, where he had gone to fetch peat. They found him faint and unable to move. He was carried down to the cottage where three weeks later he died. The Solitary who accompanied the search party tells of the sight they saw on their homeward journey when the mists broke:

> "So he was lifted gently from the ground
> And with their freight homeward the shepherds moved
> Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
> A single step that freed me from the skirts
> Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
> Glory beyond all glory ever seen
> By waking sense, or by the dreaming soul!
> The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
> Was of a mighty city . . . sinking far
> And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
> Far sinking into splendour—without end!
> This little vale, a dwelling-place for man,
> Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
> I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
> That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
> Of spirits in beatitude: my heart
> Swelled in my breast—'I have been dead,' I cried,
> 'And now I live! Oh! wherefore do I live?'
> And with that pang I prayed to be no more!"

Thus the fate of humanity is set in a larger world; the catastrophe of the lonely and aged pauper is linked, by what happened, to the glories of the heavenly City, the beauty and blessedness of God. The poet saw a certain effect of the sun's rays upon mist and cloud and mountain, and is impressed almost as was S. John by the vision of Christ in the Revelation. The sight disenchants for him everything of this world, for he has seen Heaven, the Beauty of God, and longs to depart.

There is an attempt in the pages that follow to suggest this relation of the human soul to beauty as a profound mystery, a revelation of God—a discovery of our need of God, for which, if it comes in our later years,

all that has gone before in our life has been preparing us.

"ONE THING HAVE I DESIRED OF THE LORD, THAT WILL I SEEK AFTER; THAT I MAY DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE, THAT I MAY BEHOLD THE FAIR BEAUTY OF THE LORD, AND INQUIRE IN HIS TEMPLE."—PSALM XXVII. 4.

Adventurous spirits have often caught glimpses of this mystery climbing Alpine heights. One day long ago two old friends who could not climb far were enticed by it to reach the Col de Jaman from the Swiss farm where they lodged: they spent the long hours of a spring day there together alone with the Beauty of God. The depths of the blue overhead were without a cloud, views opened of valleys below full of sunshine, leading down to the shore of the lake of Geneva; the green of the mountain-pastures was dappled with the light shadow of chestnut-trees just unfolding their young leaves, or with patches of white, where acres of narcissus poeticus filled the morning air with sweetness. Every cranny among the rocks nurses some new treasure for their delight, wonders of primula, auricula, violas, gentian, alpine rose, soldanella, S. Bruno lilies, and crimson cushions of saxifrage. One of the two friends passed on long ago to discover the eternal reality that these wonders symbolized—the Beauty of God. The other, while he waits below, still tries to learn the alphabet of the mystery One moment's recollection brings that May morning back to him, and now the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace is at work in him, half unveiling the eternal and unseen Beauty of God He is no idle dreamer of dreams, he goes back to his daily work, but carries with him into it something of what he saw in his recollection. He

goes to his business to-day with the keenness of a soul newly bathed in joy and charity. No bad news, no discourtesy suffered, no ugliness of surroundings can depress him to-day, or make him reflect unkindness or gloom. The Beauty of God that he saw in the Swiss valley has touched his soul in his prayer, and his heart will be full of thanksgiving, and all day reflect something of the fair Beauty of the Lord that has been revealed to him in His Temple.

He remembers how he got his first express instruction in that mystery. A lad inured to the rough discipline of northern winters, he found himself living in the sunshine of the Italian shore of the Mediterranean. His garden was sweet with violets and orange blossom, the woods with myrtle, blue hepatica, bee orchis, the lemon, olive, and vine terraces gay with gladiolus and scarlet anemone. At a certain point where a path to the Cap S. Martin branched off from the main road stood a shrine for the cheer of devout wayfarers, giving him, where he might have expected the image of a saint, a text from the Vulgate instead. He read there:

'*Pulchritudo agri mecum est*'—Ps. xlix. 11 (Vulg.).

From childhood he had of course been conscious of a vague inexpressible delight in the beauty of the world. Children do not inquire about such impressions, and their elders naturally do not volunteer to interpret their souls' secrets to them, but here was a clear message from the Word of God, suggesting to the lad a higher source of his joy in nature than he had ever suspected; it set him wondering. His next lesson came some months later.

He started one day before sunrise alone on a walk of twenty miles along the Cornice road that overhangs

the Mediterranean in North Italy. He saw the wrinkled sea in the early morning sunshine, without any comfort or delight in it, because he had left behind his dearest friend in the world—his mother—dying in much pain, in their villa among the olive trees by the sea. He was on his way to the city to seek surgical help, which he knew must be ineffectual. Dejected and without hope he trudged on refusing to look up at glories in sea and sky that seemed indifferent to his misery, till something arrested his steps, and the tenor of his bitter thoughts. He had noticed the withered bents, and weeds at the road-side, burnt up by yesterday's sun blaze, and thought of his own life withered with grief, and fear of a future emptied of the comfort of love; but here under the rock by the road-side one wild plant caught his eye, a small cranesbill, as fresh as if it were the first flower God ever made. Its one rose-coloured blossom had opened very early, and was filled with a drop of night-dew that sparkled in the light of morning by the dusty road-side. He stood for some moments gazing at this image of perfect beauty, freshness, and joy accidentally shown to him, till his eyes filled with tears, and his heart came to life again with trust in God, Who had made the one wild flower so irresistibly lovely, and revealed the secret of its gentleness to him in his hard and bitter mood. It was through God's mercy and the mere power of beauty, he knew, that he was won back that day to true thoughts of God. The little flower made him know at once and with absolute certainty that God would have in His holy keeping the saint he left behind in mortal pain, not less lovingly than He cherished His one wild plant by the road-side. Christ is risen and ascended, not for us alone, but for all creation, and it is through that door opened in heaven

that we begin to recognize the true significance and delight of nature. It is religion, the Catholic faith, the love of God, that has taught us to discover the joyful and sorrowful mysteries which nature hides—its wonderful and ennobling harmonies.

There is nothing in creation that we are more sure of, or that is more precious to us, than the quality of beauty, and yet no one can account for it, no one has ever reached its secret: all analysis fails. Mr. Balfour says: "No mystical creed (in regard to beauty) can be squeezed out of observation and experiment; science cannot give it us."[1] But its spiritual and moral influence no one questions. A spirit which you call beauty passes from some external object you look upon into your soul, the joy of which assures you that love, and not mechanical necessity, governs the world. There was something just now in the play of the waves that for an instant arrested you, you could not tell what it was, you could not trace it or analyse it; while your eye followed and sought to seize it, it was gone; but for the instant it filled your whole being with joy and desire; desire for what? There was something in the light touching the rocks yonder, the flowering shrubs, and the waters, which awakened the feeling of a beauty which human nature could not bear, if it were completely unveiled. It was but a glimpse, and it is gone now, and you cannot tell anyone what you saw or felt, yet you know that that moment's glimpse of an immaterial perfection was one of the deepest impressions of your life. It has left you with a higher view than you ever had before of the true basis of your own and of all created being. In the fervour of that revelation you say to yourself, "I feel now, what I professed as a theory

[1] Balfour, "The Foundations of Belief," p. 66.

before, that there is a spiritual basis of perfection for me, and for those wild men[1] outside the fold of Christ among whom I live, and this flash of beauty revealed to me that this perfection is God."

I cannot prove this, but we know it. Beauty enthrals us and commands, it speaks to us with authority. It irradiates us and things round us with deep joy. Beauty in every form has the same power in some degree. You look up to the sky on a starry night, and the beauty of the heavens makes all your anxieties and worries seem nothing. You walk in another world where there are no wounds, no anxieties, nothing mean or hopeless. You have seen, and your heart is on fire with a love that lifts it into the world of the uncreated, invisible Loveliness, the eternal realities. It was created beauty that did this for you, opened for you this new world where all is true; one touch and you have slipped from under the weight of years, of endless works and unmeaning words. It is with you as with the infant in arms that shouts with joy at the sight of the moon reflected in the water. You laugh to yourself to think of your soul's prison house of an hour ago, the fever and fret, for you are free now, looking up and walking in *a world where nothing can go wrong.* I do not look to the material forms of beautiful things to satisfy this sense of beauty that belongs to us as created in God's image; I look upon them again and find nothing after all to feed upon. Only the touch of beauty that flashed from them opened a sudden way for me through all created forms; it was as it were the opening to me of the gates of the heavenly City. "What!" writes Blake, "when the sun rises, you ask me if I do not see a round disc of fire somewhat like

[1] The Kafir tribes. This passage was written in South Africa.

a guinea? Oh, no, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.'"

It is of this spiritual revelation that beauty has to make that Mr. Balfour writes: "I admit that I require a mystical supplement to the strictly critical view of beauty and art." "We must believe that somewhere and for some being there shines an unchanging splendour of beauty, of which in nature and art we see, each of us from our own standpoint, only passing gleams and stray reflections, whose different aspects we cannot co-ordinate, whose import we cannot fully comprehend, but which at least is something other than the chance play of subjective sensibility, or the far-off echo of ancestral lusts."[1]

The mystery of beauty which science cannot account for, but which human nature dreams of, and looks for wistfully, is traced in the Bible to God, as in the verse quoted above, and in Psalm xc. 17, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," and in Isaiah xxxiii. 17, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." But that which no eye saw in the old dispensation is revealed to us by His Spirit in Christ, Who is the ἀπαύγασμα, the outshining of the glory of the Father, and the express image of His substance. So that throughout the Christian age the idea of beauty is sacred, and seen to belong essentially to God. Beauty in created things has been constantly recognized as an effulgence from the Divine loveliness.

For example, there is a surprising phrase in the "Apology" of Aristides,[2] referring to a new birth of

[1] Balfour, "The Foundations of Belief," p. 65, and "Romanes Lecture."

[2] Addressed to the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 130.

the sense of beauty which Christianity has brought us: "And because they (the Christians) acknowledge the goodness of God towards them, lo! on account of them there flows forth the beauty that is in the world." Aristides seems to give his own experience of Christianity: Since he became a Christian he has become aware of a beauty in the world, which otherwise he had never discovered. The created world has become full of a loveliness unknown before, because God assumed a new relation to it when the Eternal Word took a created nature of the Blessed Mary. He is the "Outshining of the Glory of God," and has communicated to creation a reflection of dignity, glory, and beauty beyond its own. A theologian giving the sense of S. Thomas says: "The Word of God Incarnate is the source of all beauty; He is that ineffable splendour which glorifies created nature." And S. Anselm says: "God is the absolute beauty."

S. Ephrem the Syrian contemplates the Divine beauty as a power of the Holy Spirit alluring, drawing him to God. "*That I should not fail to cleave to Thee,*" he writes, "*Thy beauty enticeth me.*" A very early Christian Psalter lately discovered has this remarkable phrase: "*For my love is the Lord, and therefore will I sing unto Him; for I am made strong by His praise. . . . I will open my mouth, and His Spirit will utter in me the glory of the Lord and His beauty.*"[1]

S. Augustine hears all creatures in heaven and earth praising God. "*Confessio ejus super cœlum et terram,* all things confess Him, all things cry aloud: the beauty of all things is in a manner their voice, whereby they praise God. The heaven crieth out to God, 'Thou madest me, not I myself.' Earth crieth out, 'Thou

[1] "An early Christian Psalter," Rendel Harris.

createdst me, not I myself.' Regard the heaven, it is beautiful: observe the earth, it is beautiful: both together are very beautiful. He made them, by His rod they are swayed, He ordereth their seasons, He reneweth their movements, by Himself He reneweth them. All these things, then, praise Him, whether in stillness or motion, whether from earth below or from heaven above, whether in their old state or in their renewal. When thou seest all these things and rejoicest, and art lifted up to the Maker, and gazest upon *His invisible things understood by the things which are made, His confession is in earth and heaven:* that is, thou confessest to Him from things on earth, thou confessest to Him from things in heaven. And since He made all things, whatsoever in these things pleaseth thee, is less than He. Let not then that which He hath made so please thee, as to withdraw thee from Him Who made it: if thou lovest what He hath made, love much more Him Who made. If the things which He hath made are beautiful, how much more beautiful is He Who made them: *His confession is in earth and heaven.*"[1]

"The vision that surpasses all that is lovely on earth, the beauty of the sea, of the air, . . . of the sun and moon, . . . of the stars, of the Angels—that vision surpasses them all, because all lovely things derive their beauty from that vision of God."[2]

For S. Augustine the Beauty of God expressed an intellectual quality. "For when I set before the eyes of my heart (such as they be) the intellectual beauty of Him out of Whose mouth nothing false proceedeth, albeit where truth in her radiance doth more and more

[1] S. Augustine on Ps. cxlviii. (Vulg.).
[2] S. Aug. on 1 S. John iii. 2.

brighten upon me, then my weak and throbbing sense is beaten back: yet I am with love of that surpassing comeliness so set on fire, that I despise all human regards which would thence recall me."[1] But the moral significance of God's beauty was perhaps more constantly in his mind. For example, in his Commentary on S. John, he writes, "What a love must that be which makes the lover lovely! But God is always lovely, never unlovely, never changeable. He first loved us Who is always lovely: and what were we when He loved us but foul and unlovely? But not to leave us foul; no, but to change us, and if unlovely to make us lovely. How shall we become lovely? By loving Him Who is always lovely. As the love increases in thee, so the loveliness increases, for love is itself the loveliness of the soul."[2]

In his contemplation he discovered the source of all beauty in Christ as the manifestation of the Divine Love. "He first loved us, and gave us to love Him. . . . By loving Him we are made beautiful. How find we Jesus beautiful? 'Thou art fairer than the children of men: full of grace are thy lips, because God hath blessed thee for ever.' Christ, then, is beautiful in heaven, beautiful on earth, beautiful in the womb, beautiful in His parent's arms, beautiful in His miracles, beautiful under the scourge, beautiful when inviting to life, beautiful when not regarding death, beautiful in laying down His life, beautiful in taking it again, beautiful on the Cross, beautiful in the sepulchre, beautiful in heaven. Listen then to the song unto understanding, and let not the weakness of the flesh turn away your eyes from the splendour of His beauty!

[1] S. Aug., "Contra mendacium."
[2] S. Aug. on 1 S. John iv. 19.

The highest beauty, the real beauty, is that of righteousness. . . ."[1]

He is always jealous lest we should stop short of God in the contemplation of the beauty of any creature. Thus :—

"Wherever Thou turnest, He speaketh to Thee by traces, which He has impressed upon His works, and by the very forms of outward things recalleth Thee, when sinking down to things outward. Woe to them who leave Thee as their guide, and go astray in the traces of Thee; who instead of Thee, love these intimations of Thee, and forget what Thou intimatest! O Wisdom, Thou most sweet light of the cleansed mind; for Thou ceasest not to intimate to us what and how great Thou art, and these intimations of Thee constitute the universal beauty of creation."[2]

Ruskin quotes Linnæus to illustrate the effect of the contemplation of nature upon the man of modern science, who writes thus, "As one awakened out of sleep, I saw (in nature) the Lord passing by, and I stood as in a trance."[3]

It is very interesting to observe the new kindling of the sense of beauty that comes with all advance in the knowledge of God. Here is the testimony of a Christian of an austere and reserved type, Henry Martyn, Senior Wrangler, confessor, and missionary in India. Writing in his journal he discovers in himself a keener sense of beauty, and attributes it directly to his finding God in his conversion. "Since I have known God in a saving manner the fine arts have had charms unknown to me before. I have received (by conversion) what I suppose is a taste for them; for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions from

[1] S. Aug. on Ps. xlv. [2] Aug. de Lib. Arb. ii. 16.
[3] Et obstupui.

the sublime and beautiful." Landing at Cape Town on his way to India he takes a holiday alone on Table Mountain, still striving with depression and gloomy thoughts. He writes,[1] "I rose at five and began to ascend Table Mountain at six. I went on chiefly alone. I thought on the Christian life—what uphill work it is—and yet there are streams flowing down from the heights, just as there was water coming down by the kloof which we ascended. Towards the top it was very steep, but the hope of being soon at the summit encouraged us to ascend very lightly. As the kloof opened a beautiful flame-coloured flower appeared in a little green hollow, waving in the breeze. It seemed to me an emblem of the beauty and peacefulness of heaven, as it shall open upon the weary soul when its journey is finished." By the sight of one wild flower God could cheer a noble but morbidly dejected man, and show him a door open in Heaven for his consolation.

In the diary of a contemplative spirit of our day there is an illustration of a change that comes in the experience of a soul faithful in prayer, in regard to her relation to external nature.[2] This soul, though that of a musician and intensely sensitive to created beauty, has at last perfectly learnt S. Augustine's lesson—has never stopped in the contemplation of the intimations of God in creation, but has gained perfect freedom in its enjoyment by using it always and only as a way to God. She writes, "Formerly it used to seem as though I were saying farewell to a person when I left the sea, but now, as I only see God in it, and since God does not leave me, I no longer feel this regret." She writes later, "During yesterday's Communion my soul was penetrated by the

[1] "Life of Henry Martyn," by the Rev. John Sargent, pp. 53, 136.

[2] "The Spiritual Journal of Lucie Christine, 1870-1908."

vision of the beauty of God; this beauty is so far above all, so infinitely other than ours!—for our beauty is dependent upon measure . . . God is infinite beauty.—My soul was enkindled through her nearness to this fire, for there is an intimate relation between Divine beauty, and the beauty of creation, which is its reflection; and the soul feels that she is created to possess this infinite beauty, and however little may be given her to see of it upon this earth, she clasps it, embraces it with delight, and feels she can never let go her hold of it." And again, "Jesus entered into my soul in Holy Communion, and I no longer saw any but Him. I saw His love producing all beauty and all sanctity in Mary and in the Angels . . . I saw that the beauty of all creatures loses itself in the beauty of God, as S. Francis de Sales says, 'The stars grow pale and wane in the light of the sun.'"

But what have we to do with the Beauty of God to-day who can see nothing through the clouds of His wrath but the fierce war of nations tearing each other to pieces? Yet if God sent us into this conflict to bear His sword to the rescue of feebler peoples trampled under foot by the arrogance and cruelty of the stronger, we shall recognize in the desolating conflict itself traces of unearthly nobility and loveliness. Such traces appear already in the spirit of our sailors and soldiers, in their courage, discipline, and cheerful self-sacrifice, in the good humour with which they face a campaign of hysterical hatred, in the patience of the wounded, in the brave resignation of the bereaved, in the keenness of non-combatants to help at home to the best of their power, in a nation that is coming to itself, and desiring to give itself to God in the mission of repentance and hope.[1] Must one not recognize the mystery, for instance,

[1] "The National Mission," 1916.

in the widowed mother of four sons who all offered themselves for service in the war, of whom two are killed in battle already, the other two severely wounded but now recovered. One of these while at home is urged by friends not to return on his recovery to the front, so he asks his mother if she wishes to keep him with her from returning to active service. She answered: "No, if you feel it right to go." After thinking a minute, no doubt of his two brothers already killed in action, and of his mother's loneliness, he said to her: "A sacrifice is not a sacrifice, is it, mother, if you stop half-way? It must be all, or it isn't a sacrifice at all." Or may I quote from a letter written home by a young soldier of this University a few hours before he was killed in action? "The love that binds us together is stronger than anything else in the world. I do absolutely and honestly believe in God's care for me, and for all of us. If it is His will that I should live, then I know I shall; but if the other, well, He knows what is best for us all, and hard though it may seem, yet we know that in some way or other *it is the best possible that could happen to us, because He wills it.* That is a very simple faith, but it is mine, and I know it is yours also, therefore why worry? There is no need to."

Lately a youth, whom no military taste, but conscience made a soldier, died in hospital at Malta, of wounds received in Gallipoli. When near to death, his doctor writes: "Never did he wander for a moment, or utter one unclear word. He was fully conscious, and knew his end was near. Then, most wonderful of all, he fixed his eyes, looking outward as he lay on his side, and said slowly, each word separately and with unusual emphasis, 'This is the most beautiful moment of my life. . . . Oh! what a superb moment.'" What could be the

beauty that so cheered a lad dying of his wounds far from home? Was it the same that won S. Augustine long ago? "Sero Te amavi, Pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova!" (Late, late loved I Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new!)[1]

"O invisible God, Who seest all things; eternal Light, and in comparison of Whom every other light is but darkness. . . . May it please Thee, O Father of lights, to send forth Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead us directly to Thy holy mountain. . . . Purify, we pray Thee, our souls from all impure imaginations, that Thy most beautiful and holy image may be again renewed within us, and by contemplating Thy glorious perfections, we may feel daily improved within us that divine similitude, the perfection whereof, we hope, will at last make us for ever happy in that full and beatific vision we aspire after."—A prayer of Archbishop Leighton (1611–1684) at the end of his exhortation to students at the beginning of the University Term.

[1] S. Aug. Conf. x. 27.

XVII.

FELLOWSHIP.

"God's oor hame an' gien ye be at hame, we canna be far sun' ert."—SCOTCH PROVERB.

SOLITUDE, in some degree, inevitably befalls the aged. Those who really knew the old man, the friends of his youth, have reached their journey's end before him, and he is left to travel the later stage much alone. But the Christian declines to regard this as a condition that is to leave him depressed, or self-absorbed and indifferent to the new generation that surrounds him. On the contrary, his capacity for fellowship will grow under conditions that chill and depress the worldly old man. For in Christ he is finding the true value of solitude—the wilderness into which the Lover lures the soul that he may speak to his heart. That solitude that gives him to God only separates him from himself, his lower self; and to have spoken with that Lover makes him intelligent in love, and able to understand and comfort his brethren, whomsoever he may meet. Just because he knows the cross of solitude and its preciousness, he is specially fit to serve his brethren as a conductor to the sacred fire that brings together and holds together the various elements of Christian society.

The Apostle of old age at Ephesus, when carried by the brethren into the church, unable to make any long discourse, was content to exhort the faithful in

the Lord's words, "*Little children, love one another.*' The old man is perhaps the best preacher of fraternal love and Christian fellowship, because he has had the longest experience of the charity of God, Who has had such long patience with his own past failures in that virtue. He has learnt that to be "all of one heart and one soul," and to live together "in gladness and singleness of heart,"[1] is a disposition in society that does not spring from any accidental agreement among neighbours, but from the principle of a new and heavenly life. The aged Christian has discovered the secret of the Pentecostal gift that enables men to be "of one mind in an house,"[2] and he is slow to find in the imperfections of others a bar to fellowship.

Besides, his experience has given him a truer insight into character, he sees people in a truer perspective than others can. "*All of us cannot see it,*" wrote a friend yesterday, "*but old age opens one's eyes to much good that is in others.*" The old man has a surer sense than the young of what is soundest and best in the disposition and character of those amongst whom he lives. Again, he has a special love of children, and sympathy with the young—qualities that contribute to fellowship in the family and in society generally. Misunderstandings are often brought to him for sympathy or advice, and if he has a disposition disciplined and sweetened by patience, he has the opportunity and power to give good counsel. The training of a longer campaign in the Christian conflict is likely to leave him a man of peace, and "The good Peacemaker," of whom à Kempis writes thus:[3]

"First keep thyself in peace, and then shalt thou be

[1] Acts ii. 46; iv. 32. [2] Ps. lxviii. 6.
[3] "Imitation," Bk. II., chap. iii.

able to set others at peace. A good Peacemaker turns all things to good. Every one is glad to enjoy peace, and love those best that agree with him. But to be able to live as a Peacemaker with the hard and perverse, or disorderly, or tiresome, is a great grace, and very commendable, and a manly thing.

"But think not therefore that thou hast found true peace if thou feelest no heaviness, and art vexed with no adversary, or if thou be in great devotion and sweetness.

"Where, then, Lord, is it to be found?

"In surrendering thyself with all thy heart to the divine Will, not seeking thine own in great matters or in small, in time or in eternity; so that with unchanged countenance thou abide in thanksgiving amid prosperity and adversity. If thou art so brave and patient in hope that when inward comfort is withdrawn thou prepare thy heart to suffer even greater things, then art thou walking in the true way of peace."

Again, he treats of the discipline by which the secret of the Peacemaker is learnt:

"Study, my son, to do the will of another rather than thine own. Choose always to have less rather than more.

"Seek always the lowest place, and to be inferior to every one.

"Wish always and pray that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee.

"Behold, such a man enters the land of peace and rest."[1]

This will be the man, "who keeps himself in peace, and is in peace with others, and studies to bring others back to peace."

[1] "Imitation," Bk. IV., chap. xxiii.

There is no lovelier illustration of Christian fellowship than the Epistle to Philemon gives us in "Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ," beseeching the offended master to receive back the slave who had robbed him and escaped. "My child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds. . . . I beseech thee, if thou count me as a partner, receive him as myself."[1] There is the same tenderness and joy of sympathy in his Epistle to the Philippians, written also in his later years, during his imprisonment at Rome. It is still "Paul the aged" who writes to them, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."[2]

If in the family of Christ all are to be of one heart and one soul, and to continue steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, the aged, debarred more or less from external work, have a still more important sphere of help always open to them, in intercessory prayer. Bishop Churton quotes S. James, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."[3] And he observes that "in the primitive Church those ordained to the special office of pleading for others were called πρεσβύτεροι, as if the diginty of their employ-

[1] Phil. ix. 10. [2] Phil. iv. 1 ff.
[3] S. James' Epistle, v. 14.

ment conferred seniority upon them, whatever their actual age might be."

"It is a temptation," he continues, "when we ourselves have retired from active life, to think that the efforts others are making are no concern of ours. If we cannot put our own shoulder to the wheel, we care little whether the wheel moves, or stands still. That is specially blameworthy, because the power of intercessory prayer is so great. How astonished some would be if they were told that they might accomplish more in their retirement and infirmity by this means than by all that busy hands and brain had striven to do in the days of their outward activity." The prayers of saints are what swell the sails of the Church in her voyage through this troublesome world.

As infirmity gradually withdraws us from all external work, the question inevitably arises, Has God cut me off from the circulation of the vital charities—the energies of love which are the Church's life? Is there nothing left for me to do for God, for the enormous needs of the world and the Church? If I cannot work, or rise from my chair or my bed, love remains to me; I can pray. This is what S. John meant when carried into the church he could make no long discourse, but would bear witness by his "Little children, love one another" to the vital truth that love is all, and that no infirmity can hinder love. Love of my brethren will inspire me and support me to pray for them, and that love and that prayer will leave me with God. "Diligendo proximum iter agitur ad Deum."[1] I will begin at once to make a list of persons and works that have, perhaps, been too long waiting for my prayers.

[1] S. Augustine, "By loving our neighbour we make our way to God."

XVIII.

PAIN.

THE process of physical pain first awakes in the sufferer the keenest self-consciousness, in which self stretches out desperate hands to clutch some support, and finds its absolute isolation. The people and circumstances of our ordinary social and family fellowship are present as usual, or within reach, but the soul finds to its despair that its consciousness of suffering is incommunicable. It shuts the soul up within itself, out of reach of the cheer of our ordinary social surroundings ; there is the soul alone with its enemy, the pain. No friend can penetrate that solitude for our relief ; no word, no bitter cry conveys to the nearest and kindest the reality of what is endured within that solitude.

If fellowship is found it is found first in God. The only release from the intolerable burden of solitary pain is in " the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ." If it is found there, then, and though the suffering still remains it is no longer a pain that isolates, that separates me from my fellow-men, that locks me up in a dungeon unknown to any deliverer. Now, on the contrary, it is the suffering of two persons supporting one another in love, a suffering that constitutes fellowship, that, like a sacrament, admits me into the Sacred Heart of Christ, to share the mystery of His voluntary suffering to save the world. And now as a member of Christ's

Body I begin to welcome with the pain the perfect will of God. In the prayer, "Thy will be done," the soul finds itself no longer outside and alone with its pain. Love, the deliverer, has appeared, and has opened a door for it into the secret place of the Most High.[1] Hidden in the wounded heart of Christ, I can welcome the bitter pain, that is to say, I can welcome the will of God, which is His love, in the pain. And now it is no longer mere pain, but God Himself in the pain that I welcome, and God is Love. And with God I welcome all the purpose of God in sending His Son to suffer and die for us—all the purpose of God in the sacred Passion. The Incarnate Son was not separated for a moment from the Divine fellowship of the Infinite Love by His accepting in His heart the sin and suffering of the whole world. The amazing sorrow and pain was not the deadly unshared suffering in solitude that human nature cannot bear; it was the suffering of the Soul of our Lord in the fellowship of the consubstantial union, and of the mutual love of the Blessed Trinity; it was a suffering in love through which He was "made perfect." The suffering was the fire perfectly annealing the Lord's Humanity in the fellowship of Divine love, through the supreme experience of difficulty in the sacrifice of self-forsaking. His human Soul, which had the natural capacity of growth by experience, found its complete union with the will of the Father in its last act of abandonment, in which He took into His own heart, besides the horror of all our sins, all the suffering of all battle-fields, all broken hearts, all spiritual despairs and desolations.

And so my pain was the key that opened for me the door of my prison—my solitude, and admitted me into

[1] Ps. xci. 1.

the immensity of a new world—the sympathy of Christ, Who in His Passion chose to suffer the pain of every human soul, because on the Cross He took that soul and all its sin and suffering into His heart.

And as by experience of pain I find my place in the heart of Christ at the right hand of God, so it is by the same means of my pain, united with the sufferings of Christ, that I find there is a place for me in the unspeakable mystery of the mutual love of the Blessed Trinity. "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."[1] "If a man love Me . . . My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

In the experience of pain I have the opportunity of choosing and appropriating the magnificence of this union; as I accept the cost of the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. S. Peter bids us "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."[2]

If you object, "These are only words," I answer, "But they are words of God, made sacramental and effectual by our incorporation with Him, Who is the Word of God. They are words which, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, have grown into acts, into life, and character, into victory in all noble souls of Christ's martyrs, confessors, and faithful witnesses in all ages."

One can imagine a soul frightened by excessive pain and the sense of its own weakness, recurring in thought to unlawful means of relief. "I hope I shall not be driven through pain I cannot bear to take to drugs." But that is not the tone of the loyal heart, of the fellow-sufferer with Christ, of those who win the war with Him. The soul that chooses the winning side says: "I will never accept relief at the cost of denying Christ, and

[1] S. John xvii. 21; xiv. 23. [2] 1 Peter iv. 13.

refusing the fellowship of His Passion. I will never in self-will choose the secret alleviation of drugs taken without authority instead of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings if it were to save my life, so help me God. I am willing to die with Christ and all His friends, at my post. I will never forsake them in order to escape pain. If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer with him we shall also reign with Him in the kingdom that is yet to come." But, further, if we choose to die with Him to our dread of pain, we have already begun to live with Him in the fellowship of His Risen Life—of His victory; if we accept the fellowship of His sufferings, we have begun already to reign with Him.

We all, in some measure, have our opportunities of experiencing this mystery—the power of the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ to unlock the soul's prison door, shut up in itself by pain that must be unshared We have found that in communion with God we could bear pain that we could not bear with patience until we took it to Him in prayer. The change effected was immediate, we could bear it a little now, for we were no longer alone; another had come, and was silently bearing it with us in love, two were bearing it together. To S. Paul the Lord said: "My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness." His reply was, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."[1]

But a Christian's sufferings is never only the mystery

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

of one sufferer's individual relation to God. The Christian sufferer who finds in his pain the fellowship of the heart of Christ is received then also into a fellowship with the mystical Body of Christ, to enjoy new powers of the Communion of Saints. The virtue of his suffering as a member of Christ begins to reach and enrich the whole Church. His suffering united with the Passion of Christ cannot stop at his own soul's purifying and profiting; it reaches further to bless and enrich the whole body of the faithful. "I rejoice in my sufferings for you," writes S. Paul to the faithful at Colossæ,[1] "and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake which is the Church"; and to the Corinthians, "whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation . . . or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."[2]

And now, on the other hand, Christ does not stand by His faithful witness in his pain *alone*, but comes to his support accompanied by all the faithful who have ever shared His Passion. And of this mystery of fellowship a sacrament is found in the little human charities which any sufferer may meet, which, apart from God, he would perhaps hardly notice, or might even impatiently refuse. If in my pain I have found first the love of God in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, I make a new discovery. The least kindness of my neighbour finds a way right into my heart now; it reaches further, it has more meaning and value than I recognized before. If you have been a patient in hospital for some serious trouble, do you remember —you can never forget—what it was when the matron took and held your hand, just as you underwent the

[1] Col. i. 24. [2] 2 Cor. i. 6.

anæsthetic, and what was to follow—or the posy of primroses from the moors that came by post to you in bed as you began to recover? They were much more to you than a symbol of ineffectual kindness that would reach and relieve your pain, and could not. They brought you that day the love and tenderness of the wounded heart of Christ that found room for your pain, and the pains of the whole world, and gives out continually to every one who receives Him all the consolations of God. It was wonderful how far such a small service, the hand that supported you, or the surprise of the primroses, reached into your fretted spirit with the joy, the beauty, and the freshness of the infinite love. It was a divine mystery changing all things for a soul that shared the fellowship of the sufferings and consolations of Christ.

XIX.

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.[1]

In considering our later years we cannot leave out of sight the gradual decay, often accompanied by suffering, that time brings to the powers of body and mind. But we get little light from nature as to the meaning of this painful tendency to decay, little encouragement in our surrender to it. It is only as we find the Christian's place in God, the centre of all reality, that the mystery of loss and pain begins to be intelligible to us.

I remember a venerable Christian lady at Oxford, a mother of saints, telling me with amusement of an undergraduate friend of hers, a Hindu student at the University, who liked to visit her and tell her of his studies, but especially of the joy with which one day he brought her Cicero's treatise *De Senectute*, and translated pages for her on the philosopher's consolations in old age. She was greatly pleased by her young friend's kindness and philosophic zeal on her behalf. She received Cicero's consoling reflections graciously, no doubt, but was amused to recognize how far short they fall of reaching the human need, which the Gospel meets because it is the Word which speaks to us from the centre of all being, from God Himself.

[1] An Address to the Society of Watchers and Workers, taken by permission of the Publishers from "The Interior Life," by Father Congreve. Mowbray & Co.

So we often hear commonplaces about suffering that are true enough, but which do not necessarily *help* us—and we have perhaps sometimes private thoughts of our own about suffering, which are not even true, still less helpful. Considerations about suffering, true or otherwise, but *unhelpful* because they are picked up accidentally like pebbles on the shore, each for what it may be worth in itself; whereas any truth that *really* can help us must be part of the truth which is *one*, and linked vitally to all truths, like the branches of a living tree. There is no place for nostrums or empirics in the Kingdom of Heaven. The truths which save us grow out of the root of our eternal relation to God. The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations—remedies which are *alive* and ever growing on the tree which is the very life of God manifested in our nature.

No physician, I dare say, no man of real knowledge to-day would say that suffering can be completely dealt with by any one department of science, even the medical. It is constantly becoming recognized that the treatment of disease implies the treatment of a *person*, and involves a much wider and deeper knowledge than that of the mere structure and chemistry of the body. The good physician observes the habits and character of his patient—tests his will-power, as well as his heart's beat.

But though the reach of knowledge extends every day, its latest attainment is always only a step in an endless advance. The physician, we trust, never pretends he knows all about us; he tells us he has only yet reached the outside fringe of the knowledge which is needed. He will use for us such knowledge as he has, and leave the mystery of the vital process of repair with God.

And if the knowledge of the physician about our case must always be partial and incomplete, so must be also our knowlege of our condition as invalids, and so must be the good advice and consolation any friends may offer us. However clear anyone's view may be of a suffering life, or of possible remedies or alleviations physical or moral, we are quite sure that each view is incomplete, that it never reaches to the root of the matter, that half the conditions will remain unknown.

Think how the wisdom of the world is always failing us. Ages ago the Stoic philosopher taught us that suffering and death are inevitable, the law of our being: what was the use of complaining? But he could give us reasonable considerations by which we might come to make up our minds to it, and even enjoy a sense of superiority over the feeble folk who have not philosophy enough to appreciate his unanswerable reasons for not caring.

This treatment of our sorrows left out of account the mystery of the image of God in every human soul, which refuses to be content with suffering and death as a destiny, left out of account the human consciousness of being born for good and not for evil, left out of account the natural faculty of hope, which is self-justified, self-assured.

Another empiric tells us that we have in ourselves. the power of will which can work miracles of healing, and he succeeds to some extent in patching his earthly tabernacle; but his doctrine leaves him at last just where all the rest of us come in turn, at the gates of the grave. All these systems of dealing with our decay fail us one after the other, because they are all partial. They are untrue as far as they pretend to be complete.

We know of only one system of healing, moral and

physical, that proves complete, and which men have learnt to trust, and which has never failed us—and that is religion, which calls us out of ourself and all our partial guesses and unsuccessful experiments to God Himself, manifested in Jesus Christ, God with us, the Saviour of the body and of the soul. Coming by faith out of ourself, and our eager experiments and sad moral consolations, to God in Christ, we come to the centre of all being, to the Truth itself; and now we begin to see our ailment, or partial cure, and our departure before long with pain or without—we see it all in the will of God, Who is the infinite Love, Wisdom, and Power. We find our whole life, every moment of it, every development of every tissue and cell of the body—we see it all, and its endless destiny in the eternal purpose of the Divine love.

We cannot help laughing a little at the Stoic's serious prescription, his panacea of not caring. Sickness, old age, decay will come and separate you gradually from all use and relation and delight in life, but you will take it as inevitable; by the help of philosophy you will not care.

But the Christian's whole soul rises up against the idea of isolation, decay, ruin of faculty. Life for him is on fire with an intuition of progress. To acquiesce in decay is the very contradiction of life for him. Christ has brought him the assurance of a position in God where his isolation, loneliness, uselessness, powerlessness disappear. There has come to him in the prison of the decay of nature a new life from above, which raises him to a new world, makes him free of the infinite, *i.e.* of God Himself and His love. It is no longer the question how to endure a lonely, withered, and useless life without cowardly complaining; in Christ he has

come already to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to innumerable hosts of angels, to the festive assembly of the first-born enrolled in heaven.

In Christ he has reached that centre, which holds the whole truth about everything, and the truth sets him free. He uses what remedies are within reach, but deals with his infirmities as master, not as their miserable drudge.

But if you reply to him, "I don't understand the liberty you speak of; you cannot leave your room or your bed, you cannot go where you like, or do any good; you seem to me to be as really a prisoner as any convict in gaol": he will laugh perhaps and answer you: "But I am not the prisoner of a disease, or bodily weakness, I am the prisoner of the Lord Jesus; Whose personal love, holiness, beauty, freedom, are closer to me than the walls of my room or than any pain. If I am Jesus Christ's prisoner, He is with me in my prison."

It is found continually that all the conditions that shut me out of general society may shut me in to God in Christ, and to all the happy relations of our City, Jerusalem, which is above—which is free.

Pain and loss do not bring us this freedom; it is our finding Christ through them that sets us free.

In God we come to that centre where nothing can enslave us—there we belong to God, every thread of our nature, body and soul. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? From our place in God we begin to understand pain, and weakness—to see through them—as Julian of Norwich in her extreme pain saw our Lord on the Cross—and being tempted to look away from Jesus on the Cross to Heaven, refused, and answered

with all the might of her soul, "Nay, I may not, for Thou art my Heaven."

Every experience of incapacity or of pain may open for us a way to truth or to falsehood—to heaven or to hell. Each pain may be, if we will, a door opening to God, Who is our Heaven, or it may be a way that leads us back to our solitary self, and shuts us up again in that prison where all relation, use, and hope perish.

For the regenerate as such each experience in pain and incapacity is a door opening to God. The stress of pain, the weight of weakness, does not drive him to a mere physical effort of endurance, but to God. He may be incapable of another effort, but love can choose to surrender to love, instead of to necessity, and that surrender is no defeat, but a victory; the man lets go his last hold of earthly supports, and drops, not into the abyss, but into the Eternal Love, Whose everlasting arms are underneath him.

We might learn so often to look up for this door open in Heaven, which is Jesus, that we might come to find it every day everywhere, and especially in everything that is difficult and painful.

It is no help to contemplate pain, or weakness; *in itself* it is nothing. It cannot help us to dwell upon, analyse, describe it. And it is just as little good to moralize over it. The only help is to go straight to the whole truth about ourself and our pain, that is, to take refuge in God, to turn in pain to the thought of Jesus and of all that He did and of all that He is for us. Jesus suffering on the Cross to save us, and we suffering here with Him, gathered by pain into His love.

This reminds me of a friend in our Sisters' Hospital at Oxford, who was nearly always in pain, and had rare

and brief moments free from suffering, yet said to one of us: "It is not the long times of pain that I dread, for through those times I must keep close to God, and then it is well; but the times I am afraid of are the times when the pain leaves me, for then I sometimes forget Him."

The Christian patient does not say: "I am not unhappy, because I have some partial solaces, prescriptions of the Stoics, ingenious phrases of the philosophers who despise the body." But he takes refuge at the centre of all things, and says to himself day and night: "I will rejoice in the Lord with Whom and for Whom I suffer, and Who rejoices with me in all my tribulations, working out glory to God and help for the Church by every pain."

I remember a clergyman telling me of the suffering and death of his brother, a lad of twenty, and his last word uttered with his very last breath: "As long as I have any being I will praise the Lord."

From that centre of all things—my place in God, I find in the decay of the outward man an opportunity, not for a stale moral surrender to the inevitable, but for a new upspringing of eternal life in my will as it welcomes the will of God. If God's will for me should be suffering and failure, when I choose it with all my heart for Christ's sake, it is not destruction I choose, but the glorious will of God, which is His love, and our victory. The inward man may feed upon what seems its ruin, and be renewed day by day.

To suffer willingly with Christ fastens me to Christ and sets me free from myself, and my fretted despairing self-will. As I welcome His noble will, I die to my own. I do not covet that independence which Christian Science offers me—a superiority in myself over ailments and

infirmities, by the cultivation of my will-power. I am bound to be grateful for any helpful exercises in so essential a faculty, but it is no emancipation which those exercises offer me. My will is myself, and no cultivation of myself for myself is any deliverance. However I may develop any or all of my faculties, I am still after all only myself, and that self, however cultivated, proves only my despair at last. After all my best efforts, when I would do good evil is present with me. But in turning away from the body of this death, to look for the Deliverer, I find a true emancipation in Christ. Now in Christ I learn to exercise my will with new vigour and success, through the power of a new affection; now I hope for power to do all things through Him that strengtheneth me. Not through any exercise of his own faculties in themselves, but in the strength of his "joy in the Lord." S. Paul has learnt in whatsoever state he finds himself, therewith to be content; he has learnt how to be abased and to abound, to be filled and to suffer want.[1]

Think of S. Paul's phrase for the highest degree of suffering—he calls it *Crucifixion*. And see how he deals with it—not denying it, putting it aside as unreal, by sheer strength of will rejecting it, not as surrendering to the inevitable, but for love's sake accepting it, as something through which to advance to a new experience of a closer fellowship with Christ. "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me."[2]

This is the Christian mystery of victory over suffering. It is not a victory of the will developing to the highest

[1] Cf. Phil. iv. 11 ff. [2] Gal. ii. 20 (R.V.).

its own powers but a personal victory of Christ in the weak soul that gives itself to Him. S. Paul prays that his disabling infirmity may be taken away, and the Lord will not take it away, but gives him grace to deal with it. "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect (not in thy strength but) in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I"—what?—not deny the reality of infirmity, or waive it away as something to be ashamed of, but "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, . . . in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."[1]

But then sickness is not generally a single blow—it is more often a process of gradual destruction; day and night I have to deal with this siege (as it were), which is ever silently going on, the enemy at work out of sight sapping my defences. I can deal with every turn of this weary process of destruction only in one way—by my continual approach to God. I need not even pay attention to each fresh attack, but may leave my defence with God: "Thou shalt answer, for me, O Lord, my God."[2] I need no philosophy for this; one word is all I need for defence, if that word is the Name of Jesus. I shall not be afraid of new tactics, some new surprise of the enemy—new development of pain or weakness; I call Christ to hold the city. He is all my defence, I will give my will to God. His strength shall be made perfect in my weakness.

Medical science has to track the progress of the disease, and oppose it at a hundred points; but that is not the business of the Christian patient. He has not to watch

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. [2] Ps. xxxviii. 15.

the enemy, and understand the process of the ailment: he has a new life to bring to the rescue. He looks up out of all the ruin to God. His prayer, often without words, is the putting forth of the life of God, which in Christ he shares. His prayer wins God, and God is his victory. Eternal life possessed now in his weakness is answer enough to the threats of the enemy.

We find that what we need absolutely in sickness is just the same thing that we want in every other circumstance in life. Nature in its loveliest and tenderest moods does not heal or help me. I can see its peace, but I cannot make it my own. Nature sends me back to myself after all—unhealed, uncomforted, an alien; the remembrance of its beauty remains, but as the pain of a lost delight.

But one look up to God, how it brings to life all my relation to nature! all its meaning and music become intelligible to me in my thanksgiving. In my prayer and praise all the beauty of it becomes mine—part of me, a treasure which I shall never lose, because I have it in God, a treasure out of which I may help men.

It is just the same with our faculty of suffering: it is only unintelligible when we are separated from God. It is not intended to be a capacity for drinking in ruin and death—of surrender to dullness, solitude, uselessness. One look up to God, one spring of the faithful will choosing God, one cry, if it is only the Name of Jesus, and the suffering opens to us a door—to God.

Rutherford lived by this truth and puts it plainly: "I never find myself nearer Christ, that Royal and Princely One, than after a great weight and sense of deadness and gracelessness. I think that the sense of our *wants* is that which maketh an open door to Christ." He never pretends that the Cross is not a serious thing:

he concludes, "Wit and wiles, shifts and laws will not find out a way round the Cross of Christ, but we must through."

But for those who will learn the secret of this door open into Heaven, he shows that the prisoner's life is good. "I ought to esteem," he says, "the walls of any dungeon all hung with tapestry and most beautiful for the presence of my Lord Jesus; and yet I am not so shut up but that the sun shineth upon my prison, and the fair wide Heaven is the covering of it."

And he will have us not merely believe but remember and exercise this happiness; he bids us "make Christ our music and our song; for complaining and feeling of want doth often swallow up our praises."[1]

Another, writing to a friend suffering from an incurable illness, thus encourages us to believe and explore the treasures of the Cross: "Since Christ, the world of pain is no accident but a lawful department of life, with experiences, hopes, secrets of its own, that we could never learn so long as we were well. God help you to walk through this world now opened to you as through a kingdom, royal, and wide, and glorious."

And hope has courage to reach far through the gates into the City, and anticipate the *other side* of all our crosses—"your sorrow shall be," not merely survived and forgotten, but "turned into joy"—shall become the material of new joys, which could not otherwise be. With this thought of the final result in the Eternal Kingdom of sufferings crowned, Crashaw sings:

> "All thy old woes shall now smile on thee,
> And thy pains sit bright upon thee,
> All thy sorrows here shall shine,
> All thy sufferings be divine:

[1] "Rutherford's Letters," Miss Soulsby. Longmans.

Tears shall take comfort, and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.
Even thy death shall live; and new
Dress the soul that erst he slew."

And in the meantime, while we are still on the road, "How soon a smile from God can change the world!"

XX.

DERELICT.

" Thus quoth Alfred :
If thou in thine old age
Shalt be deprived of thy worldly goods,
And thou art friendless ;
Nor mayest thou with thy failing strength
Do aught for thyself,
Then must thou thank thy Lord
For all His love,
And for all thine own life,
And for the daylight,
And for all happy things
That He for man has made.
Wheresoever thou wendest
See thou always say :
'Whatsoever happens may God's will happen.' "

From the " Proverbs of Alfred." M.S. in Trin. Coll., Camb.

THE experience of people in old age may well be as various as the individuals, but there is no doubt that the above heading expresses one form of the discipline of passing years—the sense of being left behind by the advance of new generations—the finding oneself unhelpful, no longer of account, neglected, forgotten.

Some years ago I read of a discovery of great interest just then made in a sea-cave on the Riviera of Italy. It was the skeleton of a very aged prehistoric man, quite complete, and turned to stone. The attitude was of deep repose. It seemed to the discoverers that ages ago the old man, unnoticed by any of his

tribe, had crept into the cave and lain down to rest, his head supported by his elbow, and so, soothed by the murmur of the sea, had fallen asleep, and passed away in a happy unconsciousness. I often think of this old man in his solitude as a symbol of this particular trial of loneliness in age. If he was lost to his tribe, who would never miss him, and no man until to-day has known of his sepulchre, the angels will have known where the lost image of God was hidden. And "old men dream dreams"; in his last dream perhaps he would find himself again where some one cared for him.

But for the Christian there is much more significance in the opportunity which neglect, and the forgetting of past service, bring to those who suffer them in old age. There is a splendid example of this in the life of the Jesuit Father, St. Peter Claver, Servus Æthiopum.[1]

He entered the Novitiate at Tarragona at the age of 22 (1602), and took the vows 1604. It was through the influence of Alphonso Rodriguez, a lay brother of the society, and college porter, that he found his vocation as missionary to the neglected slave population of Spanish South America. "Are souls of less value," he used to say to his disciple, "than the riches which men seek in those colonies? . . . Is the love of Christ to stir men less to seek for souls than the love of the world urges them to hunt for riches? . . . O brother of my soul! what a field is open to your fervour. Go to the Indies to save the souls that perish there."

Granted permission to devote himself to the Indian Missions, he left Spain in 1610. At Carthagena he was ordained priest in 1615, and entered at once on his apostolic labours. The town was the chief centre of

[1] By M. D. Petre. Osgood, McIlvaine & Co. London, 1896.

the slave-trade. Large numbers of negroes were brought over every year from Africa.

On reaching the shore they were conducted to the slave market, looking more like skeletons than men, and were surrounded by a crowd of possible purchasers, and among them came also members of the Society of Jesus, who came to teach, baptize, and confess those who were actually dying on their arrival.

In 1622 the missionary sealed his profession with the words, "*Petrus Claver, Æthiopum semper servus.*" He had been already occupied for six years among the negroes, now he binds himself to the work for ever. Year after year new ships arrived laden with the same cargo, filled with the same disease, squalor, and ignorance. Day after day the same catechism had to be repeated, the same elementary truths taught, the same stupidity and vice overcome. Besides the care of the newly arrived, he had the charge also of all slaves settled in Carthagena, the constant visiting of hospitals and prisons, and the country missions.

As soon as the arrival of a fresh slave ship was signalled he used to set forth with his little cargo of delicacies, sweet water, fruit, brandy, tobacco, etc., and, going on board, welcomed each individually, attended first to the dying, and then washed, fed, and comforted the rest. Next morning, when he came again to visit them, the poor slaves were watching eagerly for their new friend, and received him with childlike demonstrations of affection. When they disembarked he was waiting on the shore to receive them, and had conveyances ready to carry them to their destination. If he did much to comfort their bodies, he did still more to raise them to a sense of personal dignity by impressing on them that they were exceedingly dear to him,

that it was a joy to him to be amongst them. Gradually they learnt the source of his kindness, in the fact that they were loved by One greater than himself, and that his tenderness was but the channel of the infinite tenderness and compassion.

In 1650 Father Claver was attacked by the plague. His recovery left him utterly prostrated in strength, and unable to say Mass. The religious of the house were so reduced in numbers by the disease, and so crushed with work for others, that even they also were forced to abandon him. He was left in charge of a negro quite unfit to take care of him; and the consequence was that Father Claver reaped the return his own heart would have desired from the representative of that race to whom his life had been devoted.

That poor negro little thought he would live for ever in the remembrance of the world for those acts of cruelty and neglect which seemed so natural and trivial to his coarse mind. "The slave of the blacks" became during his last years the victim of the base instincts of one of those in whom it had been his constant endeavour to rouse high and holy feelings. The time was past in which he could actively help and instruct them; all he could now do was to suffer meekly at their hands the return for his past efforts.

Among his spiritual notes was the following: "It behoves me in all things to imitate the example of the ass who, when he is spoken evil of, is dumb; when he is starved, is dumb; when he is loaded till he sinks to the earth, is dumb; when he is forgotten and despised, is dumb. He never complains, whatever may be said or done, or whatever ill treatment he may receive, for he is but an ass. So must the servant of God be: "Ut jumentum factus sum apud te."

Thus, following his own maxim, he remained dumb and silent when he was left without food or drink; when his room remained for weeks unswept and filthy; when his coarse guardian refused to help him to rise and dress or descend to the chapel; when he tortured his weak and suffering limbs by his rough handling and treatment.

A little while before his death there was great excitement in the town at the arrival of a certain Father Farina, who was to succeed Father Claver in the negro ministry. The noise of his arrival penetrated to the little cell where the former apostle lay dying and forgotten. It was one of his last acts to drag himself from his room and salute his successor, rejoicing that his place was so quickly filled.

Shortly after he went one Saturday as usual to hear the confession of a faithful penitent, and told her that he should return no more. On the morning of September 6th he communicated in the church, and said to Brother Nicholas Gonzalez, as he returned through the Sacristry: "Voyme a morir"—"I am going to die." On the following morning he was found lying unconscious, and remained so the whole of the day.

And now when the ass was indeed so dumb that it could never speak again, with a sudden rush it dawned on men's minds that something was slipping from their grasp whose value they had learnt too late. . . . Father Claver lay silent and unconscious, he never spoke or looked again, and then those round him remembered in a flash all he had said and done in the past. With those wringing pains of remorse, which we all know too well, they recalled to their minds that long career of patient devotion. They thought of the many slights meekly borne; of the many little services so

mercifully rendered and so unthankfully received; of the many occasions on which one or other might have helped and comforted him, and failed to do so. And, thinking of these things, they began to shower marks of love and reverence on the poor frame from which the soul had well nigh departed.

And so through the day the crowds succeeded each other, while he lay still and unconscious, unheeding their praise as he had been unresentful of their neglect. It was in the early morning of September 8th that the end came. It was known by no movement and no sound, but only by a sudden brightening and transparency of the countenance—that transformation which is not unfrequently to be seen at the hour of death.

The work and the suffering were over, the ass had been loaded and harnessed to the end; but now the veil was withdrawn, the prison melted into the palace, and the patient labourer heard those words so justly earned: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" It is no abstract reward, no pale human remembrance, that gives a sudden brightness to those worn features; it is a living, personal love, which embraces and fills and transports; which makes all pains, all pleasures which have gone before seem mere shadows and phantoms. He was human, and the gratitude of his kind might have been sweet to him. . . . But he has trusted the larger hope, he has believed in the larger love, and now faith and hope give place to realization, for "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

I like to contrast with this example of the Derelict another from my personal remembrance of a rarely noble and generous spirit, the foundress of a great

religious community, who, though loved and honoured to the end, tasted when her working days were over a like experience of a great forsaking, a sense of the loss of all power, opportunity, influence. Coming to her latest days she found them absolutely empty of all that had made her long life exceptionally successful, brimful of interest and hope. She sent for me to tell me of this extraordinary experience of emptiness and forsaking. It was a story of what others would have regarded as a final catastrophe, the failure of a whole life's anticipations; but she told it, I do not say with edifying resignation, but with a face radiant with joy, and the voice with which one tells the best possible news. It was like the transparent and vigorous joy of a very happy child. We were alone, and this was what she confided to me as the result of the complete breakdown of a wonderfully strenuous and influential life: She was nobody now, she had nothing; could be of no use to anyone, was forgotten and thus she summed it all up: "*I think when you have lost everything you have in the world as I have, such a wonderful new life comes into you.*" It needed the daylight to die, and night to fall before the stars could appear—but now . . .

Exercises from Father Baker for a soul suffering from neglect and loneliness, or from spiritual desolation.

O, how good art Thou, O my God, to those that trust in Thee, to the soul that truly seeks Thee! What art Thou, then, to those that find Thee!

1. I resign myself, O my God, to abide all my life among strangers.

2. Whatsoever I shall suffer, O my God, by Thy ordinance, either in body or soul, and how long soever I shall suffer, I renounce all consolation but what comes from Thee.

3. My God, though Thou shouldest always hide Thy face from me, and never afford me consolation, yet will I never cease to love Thee, praise Thee, and pray unto Thee.

4. For Thy love and in conformity to Thy blessed will, I resign myself to be abandoned by all creatures. so as to have none to have recourse to but Thee only.

5. My God, through Thy grace, neither hard usage nor mere bodily want shall force me to seek a change in my present condition.

6. My God, whatsoever affliction Thou shalt suffer to befall me, through Thy grace I will never omit or shorten my daily appointed recollections.

7. I offer myself to Thee, O my God, to be entirely disposed of by Thee, both in life and death. Only let me love Thee, and that is sufficient for me.

8. I have received at Thy hands a cross of religious penitential discipline; through Thy grace I will continue to bear it till my death, never seeking any ways to lighten it, or escape from it by external employment or other means.

9. I offer myself to Thee to suffer with patience whatsoever desolations, obscurity of mind, or deadness of affection shall befall me in a spiritual course; notwithstanding all which, through Thy grace, I will never neglect a serious tending to Thee.

10. I resign myself in sickness to be a burden to others.

11. I resign and offer myself unto Thee to follow the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit in an internal life,

through bitter and sweet, light and darkness, in life and in death.

12. My God, I know that to fly from Thy Cross is to fly from Thee that didst die on it; welcome, therefore, be thy crosses and trials.

13. My God, if Thou wilt that I be in light, be Thou blessed for it; and if Thou wilt that I be in darkness, still be Thou blessed for it. Let both light and darkness, life and death praise Thee.

14. My God, I am nothing, I have nothing. I desire nothing but Jesus and to see Him in peace in Jerusalem.

XXI.

MEMORY.

"*I will pass then beyond this power of my nature* (the mind that perceives through the body), *rising by degrees unto Him Who made me. And I come to the fields and spacious palaces of my memory, where are the treasures of innumerable images, brought into it from things of all sorts perceived by the senses.*"[1] S. Augustine's splendid phrase suggests the real dignity and greatness of the sphere of memory. If it were merely a museum of faded images of things and persons we were once concerned with, and have not yet quite forgotten, memory might have as little interest for us as possible. But in fact when we recall the years that are past we come to something besides an indistinct reflection of a few of the circumstances and principal events of our youth. Memory brings us at least the vague impression of a glory that lifted us, and all that surrounded us, out of what is commonplace. The country where our home was in childhood was full of mystery—is it not still like no other place in the world, a Holy Land?—the people, how great and sacred they were! This was the time

> . . . "When meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth and every common sight
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream."

[1] S. Aug. Conf., Bk. X. cap. viii. Venio ad campos et lata prætoria memoriæ meæ.

In those days we awoke every morning to see "the light that never was on sea or land." Looking back upon them in memory to-day we are aware of the mystery, but recover no clear vision, we see the things that then were, indeed, but only as through a veil.

Was it not that then we were in the fresh dawning of the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, the first impulse too of the grace that made us children of God? "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." We had but lately come from God, and were vaguely conscious of a greatness, a glory, and beauty that touched everything that we looked upon. That is why it is refreshing to go back in thought to the early years, when our light was set in a grander world. Since then our sky has grown overcast with clouds that our own faults raised, and we have seen "the vision splendid fade into the light of common day." The sins indeed that narrowed our horizon have been forgiven by the mercy of God; and nature is full of tender sympathy with the penitent; and still to us, in the lowliness of our return to God,

> "The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Yet she will still have a privilege, and glimpses of glory for the white souls of innocent children, that she can no longer unveil for us in their clearness.

And here is a double function of memory, it is for delight, and for discipline. Though that morning light of our earliest years no longer shines upon our path of penitence, yet we still possess it, in part at least, in our remembrance of the past. The soul of the old man who plods his last stage slowly, and with bent head, laughs inwardly at being taken for a shadow of something

that once was alive. He knows that he himself, the soul that is in him, is the very same boy whose every movement was as light as air, who went as if he had wings, and used to see wonders. Because he has memory, he is aware of

> "A primal sympathy
> Which having been must ever be."

We can still recall for our delight, though we cannot express it to any other, something of the mystery of the world as we looked upon it on first arriving here. To do so sets us back where we were when we first found ourselves in this world, the youngest in a Christian family, and that is very near to God. To remember this awakes the consciousness of life in us, and we recall what we really are in ourselves. There is always the heart of the boy in the old man, if he will only remember; for there is in him always recoverable the heart of the child of God, and inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. You entirely misunderstand him if you imagine that his sad bodily decay, the sick man's gruel, the darkened room, measure the capacity of the decrepit soul, just flickering in the socket. Where is he, do you suppose, when you leave him for half an hour, safe as it seems, and asleep? He has opened his eyes in memory on some Alpine rock-garden near the glacier, and is thinking of the beauty of God, as he remembers it mirrored in the visions of his youth.

The quiet of the aged Christian in his last days will not be the stillness of gradual extinction. It may veil a soul's eventful journey back to God—to Life and Love and Beauty, too often lost sight of, and forgotten in the rush of life; it will be the recovery of true rest by a heart that goes back in the silence of memory

to what God was to it in childhood, what He is in Himself eternally:

> "A heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
> In frosty moonlight glistening;
> Or mountain rivers where they creep
> Along a channel smooth and deep,
> To their own far-off murmurs listening."[1]

The aged invalid is supposed to be only half-conscious; in reality

> "The self-rememb'ring soul sweetly recovers
> Her kindred with the starrs; nor basely hovers
> Below, But meditates her immortal way
> Home to the original source of Light and intellectual Day."

This is no dream of poets, but the very thing that happens to any plain Christian, though he be without a trace of imagination, if he is faithful in remembering God. He giveth songs in the night, but it is to love that the music comes—love that is faithful in remembering the Beloved. "My soul shall be satisfied . . . and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips, when I remember Thee on my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches." There may be nothing in our circumstances but weariness and heaviness, but if love awakes the remembrance of God a change comes as the dawn to them that watch for the morning.

But the virtues of memory must wait for the exertion of the faithful will to discover and apply them for our joy. We do that when we set our face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, and resolve whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely—if there be any virtue, if there be any praise—to think on these

[1] Wordsworth, "Memory."
[2] Crashaw, "A Religious Home."

things. To set our affection on things above involves a choice, and should lead to a resolute forsaking of the lower things which we let go for the higher. For those debarred from work for others there is no idleness in the mere dwelling in thought on the highest and loveliest things ; for simply to think of their beauty awakens desire, and desire directed to God is prayer, and prayer brings God to the soul, and the soul to God. Brother Laurence's prayer, described as the Practice of the Presence of God, was, I suppose, no more nor less than a very perfect and persevering exercise of memory continuously directed towards God, and abiding with God. Yet so great was the freedom and happiness that it brought him, so complete the victory over all distractions and depressions, that he tells us he could pray better under the pressure and strain of his work in the kitchen than in his quiet meditation time in chapel.

There is no limit to the hidden treasures to which memory may open the way for those who use it reverently; for it not only makes us free of its own "fields and spacious palaces," and shows us something of what our childhood used to see, but in bringing us back to the remembrance of God it opens a door to contemplation, where the Holy Spirit becomes our Guide, and we find ourselves independent of books and companions, in a world no longer of faint images of a happiness that is past, but in immediate communion with the Source of all blessedness actually present with us here to-day.

It brings a serious self-revelation to note the character of the thoughts that generally occupy our minds all day long and every day. The substance of our thinking, no matter what the subject, is perhaps mainly trivial or perhaps worse, self-centred, depressing, disloyal—

so empty at any rate of all elevation, desire of God, delight in God. But here we find memory a sphere for a constant quiet exercise of self-discipline in the control of thought—in the forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing on through the gates of contemplation into our city, Jerusalem, which is above, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to search into His temple.

"Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth."[1] That requires a sustained effort; it begins by turning our thoughts away from whatever is unworthy of our upward calling, and raising them to the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. This discipline of memory is the secret of those who "walk in the light," and carry the light with them wherever they go—

> "Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."[2]

On the other hand, to relax that upward spring of grace in the soul towards what is highest in our remembrance, is to yield to the gravitation of dead nature that sinks by its own weight to what is lower and lower. There is a Christian virtue of forgetting. Christ's penitent indeed recalls his sin faithfully to make his confession, but, once absolved, holds his place in self-condemnation and humility, not by going over again in memory his forgiven sins, but by forgetting himself and keeping God steadily in view. "Now mine eye seeth Thee, therefore I abhor myself."[3] We even refuse

[1] Col. iii. 2 (R.V.).
[2] Keble, "The Christian Year," S. Matthew.
[3] Job. xlii. 6.

to recall words or acts that were only foolish or unfortunate, and which it is depressing to remember. For to go back in memory to dwell upon our own sins, or the sins of others, stains the mind, and leaves germs of corruption in the soul that absolution through the Precious Blood had cleansed. It belongs to the soul possessed by devils to dwell in the tombs, and haunt scenes of past misery: that way lies madness.

The evil that is forgiven is done with. It is disloyal to go back to the shadows from which the Light has rescued us. We were darkness, indeed, but now, absolved, we are light in the Lord. What have we to do with the darkness any more? In this sense we determine to forget that which is behind; our remembrance of all the good that we have ever known will be the remembrance of a good that is still always before us, for it will be of past good rediscovered continually in higher development and clearness. To dwell upon God's mercies in the past is no going back, but a true advance, for it is the exercise of hope; for all the goodness we have ever found in God in the past is but a prophecy of what is yet before us. In Christ we are not as those whose day is nearly over, but always as those who wait for morning, of which, dark though it may be still, we feel the silent approach.

The daily mortifications of bodily infirmity in age come mercifully to train us in putting them aside gallantly, disregarding, refusing to dwell upon them. They constitute our "light affliction which is but for a moment," and "is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed."[1] But they are also truly our share in the sufferings of Christ, to offer to God with all our love, and there to leave. What we

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17; Rom. viii. 18.

offer to God is too sacred to keep for ourselves dearly remembered in the worship of self-pity. The world, too, is full of troubles all round us. As far as we are able to help we are bound to make them our business, to remedy or to share. If they are quite out of our reach, we commend them to God, but we gain nothing by dwelling despondently upon troubles that cannot be helped. To do that is to waste time and courage with which we might help where help is wanted within our reach: it only dims the light we are each sent, as children of the Light, to bring for the cheer of the family of Christ in dark days.

XXII.

PRAYER.

By growing older we do not necessarily grow wiser or better. That happy change comes only as the soul grows in the knowledge and love of God; and prayer is the school in which it learns that knowledge of God which is love.

S. John, who learnt it leaning on Jesu's breast, brings us a special message from God that awakes the desire to go to school and learn that knowledge. "And this is the message that we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."[1] Just before he had borne witness that God is Life, manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ—Eternal Life. And later on he completes his message with the announcement that God is Love.

The special message that S. John brings is not that human history is the development of a Divine purpose, not what God has done, or will do, or even what He requires of us, but what He is in Himself from the beginning, Light, Life, Love.

Of these three principles, light conveys the idea of perfection of being, and the source of true beauty everywhere. "In Thy light we shall see light."[2] God is the Light by which the soul recognizes goodness

[1] 1 S. John i. 5. [2] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

and beauty wherever they exist, for He is Himself their source. Life and love are self-communicating principles, and express to us infinite energy, power, and delight of goodness and beauty in Him Who is the absolute Good, the absolutely Beautiful. So S. John's "message" leads us on and on to the centre of all things, to contemplate, not what God did, or is doing, but the perfection that He is eternally in Himself: and it is in prayer that we reach this contemplation.

Nor are we to suppose that this unveiling in prayer of the loveliness of God is some rare and exceptional privilege intended only for a few of the highest Saints, the contemplatives; for the very heart of the message is that this mystery of God's being as Eternal Light, Life, Love, the supreme perfection, goodness, beauty, is to be known, and was manifested to men who should be its witnesses to all the world. The mystery was unveiled, and intimately communicated to them, especially to one of them who brings the message to us. In Jesus Christ those simple men saw it with their eyes; they looked upon it, their hands handled the Word of Life which was from the beginning with the Father. And the whole purpose of their after-life of toil and suffering was to carry further and further the message with which He sent them, to make Him known to all men through the ages, Who was manifested to them in Christ. Here on earth was God manifested, seen, heard, touched, loved, hated, rejected by men as Light, Life, Love. The Person of our Lord Jesus Christ was so majestic that even the Roman centurion must recognize Him: "Truly this man was the Son of God."[1] His words were so amazingly impressive that they could never be forgotten. His humble life among men and

[1] S. Mark xv. 39.

women and children was irresistibly gracious, attractive, inspiring—not merely as good sense might judge Him in comparison with others, but as what was beyond all comparison, a matter for wonder, because here somehow shone out the Light uncreated, here energized with power the Life eternal, here poor humanity was embraced by the infinite Love.

And Light, Life, Love, express the desire in God to give Himself as widely as possible to man whom He made for Himself. God in Christ comes to seek and to save the race lost through forsaking Him. His delight is to be with the sons of men. At our Baptism the Divine Light, the Eternal Life came to dwell in us, and the Infinite Love took special possession of us in the sacrament of Confirmation, making the least of us greater than the greatest of the Prophets of the Old Testament, because of the mystery of the new birth and the gift of grace, God dwelling in us by the power of the Holy Ghost. We are endued with powers of the world to come. Light, Life, Love, are given to us, not for decoration, but by means of our prayer to use, to live by every day, so as to change our life from dullness to beauty, vigour, generosity, joy—in a word, to the likeness of Christ.

The Christian child, rich at first in his wonderful inheritance in nature, finds presently in himself vague desires that he cannot satisfy. He learns by slow degrees his need of God, and begins to pray. But the old man who, as long as he lives in this world, must daily travel further from the East, and grow poorer in the power to see the visionary gleam—he has ever more and more need to pray. And, praying to God for relief from the solitude and gloom of failing nature, he finds God, and finding God, finds that in Him he has what makes good

all needs; and that the poorer he grows in every other kind of solace, the more room there is in his heart for God Himself, the only perfect satisfaction of the soul. So in prayer he makes discovery of a positive value in the ever-increasing emptiness of the natural life, and a secret of growing rich in the heavenly treasure—in Light, Life, and Love, that is in the possession of God Himself, through being disillusioned as to all that nature promised him in his childhood.

A friend, strenuously engaged in important medical work in a foreign mission, on recovering from a severe illness that destroyed the nerve of sight, finds the result of incurable and almost complete blindness, and the end for life of all professional work. I saw a letter from this friend written with difficulty soon after the blow had fallen, in which I remember this sentence: "I am not less happy than the larks that I hear singing their blithest at this moment." The happy words need no comment, for they mean simply that the writer found in God all that the catastrophe had taken away or seemed to leave for the future impossible—Light, Life, Love. The good that made my friend's happiness in the complete wreck of every earthly hope and plan, was not the hope of any remedy that might be asked of God—the loss was irremediable—but the possession of God Himself, Who is found in the prayer of self-surrender.

Here is a soul that has nothing external to ask of God, reaching in prayer a higher happiness than any miracle or gift from God could bring, the gift which is God Himself—fellowship with Light, Life, and Love. Does it not grow clear that our old age is relieved of many responsibilities and cares in order that we may have more time to enter into this mystery, and reach

the prayer of contemplation and self-surrender, which is no mere consolation for the losses that the years bring, but is the crowning achievement of the human soul?

This is certainly the experience of Christian soldiers in this war. We have it in their own words in letters written home from the trenches. The lad is over the parapet at a signal, he leads the attack. Why does he go deliberately into desperate peril of his life? Of course it is in order to "do his duty." But what does that really mean for him? An order from a high command? A possible mention in despatches if he comes back alive? When the critical moment comes these motives are mainly forgotten, I believe, and the one thought that cheers and strengthens his heart is that he goes to give himself to God—to find a fellowship with God that can be reached no other way than by sacrifice. He crosses under heavy fire the short distance that separates him from the enemy with firm step, not just to take his chance, or to do what the rest do, but to give himself to God, whatever happens—yes, if he is killed to find that God is the Eternal Light, Life, Love, the highest good of all, and all for him. The instantaneous choice, the deliberate act of sacrifice has taught him in a moment a kind of prayer he never knew before—the prayer of the entire surrender of a life to God. The Divine response to that prayer is a release from himself. He is free now, strong too, and happy to live or die for God.

And this is what prayer is meant to do for us in all trials and catastrophes. Old age, for instance, with all its inconveniences, disabilities, depressions, is for some of us a living death; but we may make it that good death that is but the opening of the door to the

true life—death to self, by deliberately accepting it as God's will, by giving ourselves to God in it—as the soldier does in his prayer of entire self-surrender to God when the word is given for the fateful charge. That passing from self to God would set us free, and change all humiliation of bodily decay, and the valley of the shadow of death, into glory.

For we cannot give ourselves to God in that complete self-surrender while refusing to accept cordially the will of God that tries us, and brings us low. But when we do with all our heart welcome God in the loss of everything else in the world in the prayer of self-surrender, God gives Himself to us as Light, Life, Love, and we touch that fellowship with the Father and the Son that changes everything. And that powerful prayer is meant to go on. The prayer in which we leave all for God, and give ourselves to God, may fill every day, and lift us to our citizenship in Heaven. We begin to see now not only our personal trials, but all our interests on earth, all that is dear to us, family, community, country, in God—in Light, Life, Love.

As far as we learn this prayer of self-surrender, we find that everything that happens brings us to God, and leaves us with God. If there comes bad news any day, we do not stop in it, we do not imagine it is the last chapter in the purpose of God; we go on through it to the heart of God, and rest there. The last chapter in every human story we find in God Himself, in Light, Life, Love.

And this prayer leads us on to learn the habit of remembering the Presence of God, of thinking more often of God, and further, of thinking all our thoughts to God—a habit which is a true exercise of our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

For prayer implies and involves an endless advance, since what it asks is no limited boon but the Infinite itself; and the door at which it knocks opens to the heart of God, to Light, Life, Love Eternal, a world which has for ever new blessedness for us to discover. Some day we shall be old, and for most of us after labour will come comparative rest; and then we shall be glad to remember that we can spend a longer time in the things of God. And we are not to suppose that the "Door is open in heaven" promised to him that knocks, and the unveiling that it implies of the beauty of God in prayer, is some exceptional privilege for a few of the highest Saints, whom we call Contemplatives. No, our Lord cannot resist any soul that knocks, that perseveres in prayer. He opens to it, and visits it in happy moments with the gift of contemplation. The word need not frighten us. It is defined[1] as "a state to which God, in a certain measure, calls every soul that seeks Him. These visits are momentary glimpses of the boundless horizon of eternity, intended to help us to pass from faith to vision."

No one who has once realized old age as a special opportunity for a soul long exercised in active external work for God to go forward, and acquire the higher experience of recollection and contemplative prayer, will ever pity himself for the humiliating decay of nature that the years bring; for it is just that gradual decay that withdraws the man into the wilderness that God may speak to his heart, and that he may discover through willing acceptance of his disabilities, faculties for a higher kind of communion with God than he had known before.

One can imagine the chrysalis grub grown old in the "house of this tabernacle," and near the end of its

[1] Dom Gueranger.

appointed time, much disturbed by the apparently incurable decay of its shell, and revolving its unknown future with deep depression. Gradually the rents that threaten dissolution widen, the supreme moment arrives, and the creature with a last effort of despair extricates itself from its ruins, and to its amazement shakes out unimagined wings, and finds itself free at last with new powers in a new world, exploring at will fresh fields of air and sunshine.

So it is with expectation that we enter the shadow and stillness that fall as the years increase.

We are coming into our last spiritual Retreat, that will shut out nothing from us but our darkness, and will reveal to us in God more than we had ever known of Light, Life, Love, and open up within us new faculties of apprehending Him. With God's help we will never allow physical failure, which is intended in God's mercy to bring us closer to Himself, to be a bar to advance in communion with Him. The quietness and retirement of age offers us the occasion to reach a higher kind of prayer than we could learn in the days of our activity, the prayer of absolute and affectionate self-surrender to God. The mortifications of bodily infirmity cordially accepted set the soul free to die to earthly attachments, to find wings, to aspire and to advance in contemplation. And we cannot contemplate God the Eternal Love without growing to love more. As one cannot look upon the first wild roses in the hedge in April without a new-born happiness akin to love and praise, so the soul cannot in prayer contemplate God Who is Love, but the love of God, the desire of God, will awake and grow in it.

I find this expressed in S. John Damascene's homily on the "Transfiguration of our Lord." He points out

that S. Matthew and S. Mark say of His going into the mountain, that He went "apart," *κατ' ἰδίαν*, but S. Luke says "to pray," and he puts the two together: *κατ' ἰδίαν καὶ προσεύξασθαι, μήτηρ γὰρ τῆς προσευχῆς ἡ ἡσυχία. προσευχή δε θείας δόξης ἐμφάνεια.* "Apart and to pray for tranquillity is the mother of prayer, and prayer is the manifestation of the Divine glory."

A patient in S. John's Home one day gave this verse by Victor Hugo to Father Benson when he visited her in her last illness, and he, *stans pede in uno*, by her bedside made for her the version that follows. The verse illustrates very well the Christian soul's independence of the failing body's support:

"Soyons comme l'oiseau
Posé pour un instant
Sur des rameaux trop frêles,
Qui sent trembler la branche,
Mais chante pourtant,
Sachant qu'il a des ailes."—

VICTOR HUGO.

"Let us learn like a bird for a moment to take
Sweet rest on a branch that is ready to break:
She feels the branch tremble, yet gaily she sings.
What is it to her? She has wings, she has wings."—

R.M.B.

I find another illustration of the same mystery in a passage on the Soldanella, in Mrs. Sydney Lear's book entitled "Weariness":

"I remember a dark hour being wonderfully lightened by the accident of coming upon a little withered Soldanella in a book, on the margin of which was scribbled in pencil the following extract from Mr. Ruskin's 'Modern Painters': 'If passing to the edge of a sheet of snow upon the lower Alps early in May, we are sure to find two or three little round openings pierced in

it, and through these emerges a slender, pensive, fragile flower, whose small dark purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of fatigue after its hard-won victory. And it utters a call for sympathy, offers an image of moral purpose and achievement, which cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.' "

The habit of mind that looks upon all such stray brightnesses and solaces as coming from the loving hand of that dear Lord Who is ever ready to comfort His weak children, "as one whom his mother comforteth," is a habit to cultivate beyond expression. It gives a different meaning to everything in life; the tiny joys and sorrows have a purpose, are messages; the savourless blank sense of loneliness and weakness vanishes, and we enter into the meaning of the lines:

"Thou art in the least flower that looks to Heaven;
  And art Thou not in that heart's inmost scroll
That leans on Thee, forgiving and forgiven,
  Despised but not despising, while the soul
  Doth man herself in growing self-control?
From weakness felt in dungeons of dim night
  Gathering immortal sinew, to unroll
And nerve her wing to bear the mighty flight,
And cleanse her eye to stand the blaze of Heaven's light."

XXIII.

THE DESIRE OF HEAVENLY GLORY.

"Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks:
So longeth my soul after Thee, O God.

"My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God:
When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"

PSALM xlii. 1, 2.

WE are responsible for our thoughts and desires as well as for our acts. We are free to think of what we like to think of, and to desire the good that in our hearts we really set highest. "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." If I love Heaven, I willingly muse on Heavenly things. "We live," it is said, "by admiration, love, and hope." We grow like to that good which we long for and delight to dwell upon; if we desire earthly satisfactions, their earthliness imparts its character to us. But we are under no necessity to dwell on the desire of trivialities; we are free, and can in a moment raise our desires if we please to higher things. And if we do press past earthly and trivial things, reaching in desire towards the heavenly, we shall grow like the higher things we long for. So S. Paul bids us, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."[1] And he adds, "When Christ, Who

[1] Col. iii. 2. Quæ sursum sunt sapite, τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε.

is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." We shall be manifested in glory. The heavenly things that we have learnt to set our hearts on will appear in the heavenly character they have wrought in us.

If we deliberately dismiss from our thoughts trifling things, the little satisfactions or worries of the day, in order to reach up in desire to God, we have not merely put a check on our love of earth and of self—have not merely changed the subject of our thoughts, but we have changed the world we live in, we are actually breathing the higher air of heaven. What seemed but a fruitless longing for that which is too high for us, has actually raised us. It has proved to be an act of love, a prayer, a supernatural energy, a power of the Holy Ghost exerted by us, by which we reach God, and know that we possess God. And here it appears that the desire itself which changed us was no self-willed impulse, but a Divine gift responded to: it was God's love shed abroad in our hearts that moved us to choose and desire God, Who is Love, above all that is lower.

The poet Lowell expresses this very clearly when he writes:

> "The thing we long for that we are
> For one transcendent moment."

and adds,

> "Longing is God's fresh heavenward will
> With our poor earthward striving:
> We quench it that we may be still
> Content with merely living.
> But would we learn that heart's full scope
> Which we are hourly wronging,
> Our lives must climb from hope to hope,
> And realize our longing."

I shall never forget one evening on Robben Island, a Home for Lepers in South Africa, when, released from the exercises of Retreat, I came out of chapel alone just at the setting of the sun. I remember now the eagerness with which I pressed on up the white road that led to the lighthouse on the highest point of the island. I made haste in hope to catch a glimpse of the sunset, for though the western horizon was hidden from me by the rising ground, there was a reflected glow that told of it high up in the sky as clear as crystal crossed by a few bars of violet cloud at rest. I realized that unspeakable solemnities were being enacted, just out of my sight on the horizon, that I longed not to lose. For old age awoke in me a hunger to reach beyond the solitary darkness through which I walked, and inspired me with a conviction that there lie mysteries of love and beauty to discover, just beyond the verge of our senses, for a soul that desires them—mysteries of which such scenes in nature are a sacrament.

That is the reason of the power nature has over us; that was why I *must* hasten to reach the point whence I might see the horizon where the traces of the sunset were fading with such solemnity, and why I *must* listen to the murmur of the sea breaking along the shore far and near. This lofty and mysterious power which nature has to compel our reverent attention is the point at which the things we contemplate transcend themselves, and touch the infinite. The beauty of the creature begins just where it eludes your observation and pursuit. You are conscious that it calls you to rise and follow further out of yourself than you ever dared, on towards the infinite, invisible Perfection. I have seen, I have heard, something which has left me more dissatisfied with myself than ever—which has

left me all longing for the loveliness that alone satisfies, and that is, I am more sure than ever, within my reach, and close to me; something, too, which I fear, for it bids me forsake myself, and follow the Uncreated Beauty to its home in the heart of God. Thus the contemplation of God in nature leads to the contemplation and desire of God in Himself.

S. John of the Cross speaks of this in his "Spiritual Canticle":

> "O, who can heal me?
> Give me perfectly Thyself.
> Send me no more
> A messenger
> Who cannot tell me what I wish.

"As uncreated things furnish to the soul traces of the Beloved, and exhibit the impress of His beauty and magnificence, the love of the soul increases, and, consequently the pain of His absence: for the greater the soul's knowledge of God, the greater its desire to see Him, and its pain when it can not. The will cannot be satisfied with anything less than the vision of God, and therefore the soul prays that He may be pleased to give Himself to it in truth, in perfect love. . . . Every glimpse of the Beloved, every knowledge and impression or communication from Him—these are the messengers suggestive of Him—increase and quicken the soul's desire after Him. The soul therefore cries out:

> "Give me perfectly Thyself.
> Send me no more a messenger.

"O Lord, Who didst give me Thyself partially before, give me Thyself wholly now: Thou Who didst show glimpses of Thyself before, show Thyself clearly

now. . . . Thy messengers neither know Thee wholly, nor can they speak of Thee wholly. For there is nothing in earth or Heaven that can furnish that knowlege to the soul which it longs for. . . . Instead, then, of these messengers be Thou the messenger and the message."

The desire of Heaven which made Father Benson's austere life so inwardly joyous and full of aspiration, he urged upon others in his teaching to cherish as an essential Christian duty. Thus he wrote :[1] "It is to be feared that people think very little about Heaven. The want of such thought leads to the earthliness of our daily habits. People wish to go to Heaven when they die, but the idea of Heaven present to many men's minds is only that of a happy place, very different in some unknown respects from this present world, but chiefly to be desired as summing up the forms of life which we know here, without the inconveniences belonging to our present condition.

"This can never act as an elevating principle to our lives. The Apostle speaks of our conversation or citizenship being in Heaven. That implies an active appreciation of the spiritual life along with God, and we cannot rise up so as to claim our part in it, unless we are constantly occupied in thinking of its requirements. It is not enough for us that Christianity leads us to avoid certain grosser sins of the heathen. It is necessary that we should be living in the love of God which is the essence of all heavenly joy. There must be a real 'love of Christ's appearing,' an intelligent apprehension of our fellowship with Him, developing the experience of the Divine Love which belongs to Him.

"We must recognize that we are now in Heaven as being His members, and that this is our true joy while

[1] *Cowley Evangelist*, Sept., 1906.

we are on earth. We are not to suppose that we shall be happy when earth is taken away unless we are rising up by deadness to the world, so as to experience that higher fellowship, while we are being trained for it under the discipline of sacramental grace.

"We have to think of heaven, not as a future state, but as a sphere of life in union with Christ in God which has its beginning upon earth. It is to have its consummation hereafter, if we continue rooted and grounded in Christ, and not moved away from the hope which is set before us. A vague expectation that we shall be happy in Heaven with Christ after death is no preparation such as to fit us for its enjoyment. If it is to be a higher joy than that of earth, there must be a proportionate consecration of our lives to live in the power of that joy. It will not be enough to find a surprise when those words are spoken—'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' They will not meet our need if we have not been looking forward and upward to the joy of our Lord, to rejoice as He rejoices while waiting for His appearing. . . .

"God is in heaven, and we upon earth. This was an impassable barrier to any true Divine fellowship in the old dispensation. It is so no longer. Although we are upon earth we are the children of the Heavenly Father. We cannot draw near to Him as His children unless we rise up to the heavenly character of the life received from Him.

"That life is given to us by sacramental grace in Christ. Although it is hidden now in ourselves, as it was in Christ Himself during the years of His humiliation, yet it is as true in us now as it was in Him. 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' We have to live as truly in its power as He did, Who 'by the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God' . . . 'He

for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame,' and thus He showed Himself worthy to sit down 'on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' We must live in the strength of that joy as set before ourselves, otherwise we canot rise out of the bondage of earthly exile.

"How little do people realize the heavenly birth of a child in Holy Baptism. Therein we are made 'heirs of the kingdom of heaven,' because we are made members of Christ. . . . This inheritance is not a merely outward possession, it is a result of nature divinely operative with love. . . . 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' Without the indwelling sanctification of this Holy Spirit heaven could be no place of enjoyment to us. . . .

"Heaven, therefore, is a sphere of existence which has its commencement upon earth. It is not properly a future state about which we can know nothing until we get there. It is a state beginning at our Baptism by incorporation into Christ, and needs to be kept in continual vital energy by our reaching out to lay hold upon the hope of development which is set before us, that so we may grow to the 'measure of the stature of Christ.'

"We must be exercising those powers which are to constitute our joy when we shall be summoned for 'the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.' The joy of our Lord is the joy which He takes in reciprocating the Father's love. Our joy must be in the same manner directed towards Himself, and in Him to the Father.

"This joy lifts us up out of the earth to heavenly contemplation in prayer and praise. This must be our constant occupation while we are on the earth.

Thus we are to 'rejoice in the Lord alway.' As S. Paul says, 'Our consolation aboundeth in Christ.' Our joy is not in having things go all our own way, but in ourselves going His way. Christian prayer is not the greedy asking for lifeless objects of delight, but the contemplative inhaling of His all-sufficing goodness, while the heart calls forth from His heart the treasures of infinite love."

This desire of God appears, in the memoir written by S. Adamnan, to have been a special characteristic of S. Columba. His laborious and severely ascetic life, whose bed was the earth, and his pillow a stone, was all lightened by the happiness of his contemplation, and the eagerness of the exile's desire to reach home. This is implied in the ancient collect for his office on June 9th: "*We pray Thee, O Lord, inspire our hearts with the desire of heavenly glory,*"[1] The passage quoted below shows how this desire shone through his last days in the Island Monastery. The desire to depart and be with Christ seemed to bring back the vigour and keenness of youth to his worn frame. Knowing that on that day at midnight he was to be released from the burden of the flesh as soon as the first stroke of the bell for the midnight service sounded, the aged saint made haste to take his place in the church before any of the rest of his Community arrived. Coming in they found their Father stretched before the altar dying, with open eyes upturned, and countenance full of joy.

[1] COLLECT FOR S. COLUMBA'S DAY, JUNE 9TH.

Thy name went far into the islands.
And for thy peace thou wast beloved.

We pray Thee, O Lord, inspire our hearts with the desire of heavenly glory, and grant that we, bringing our sheaves with us, may thither attain where the holy Abbot Columba shineth like a star before Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The story is given in full by S. Adamnan in his chapter entitled, "Of the passing away to the Lord of our holy Patron Columba, A.D. 597":

". . . Then, after a few days, while the solemnity of the Mass was being celebrated according to custom on the Lord's Day, suddenly, with eyes raised heavenwards, the countenance of the venerable man is seen to be suffused with a ruddy glow, for, as it is written: 'When the heart is glad the countenance blossoms' (Proverbs xv. 13). For in that hour he alone saw an Angel of the Lord hovering above within the walls of his oratory, and because the lovely and tranquil aspect of the holy Angels sheds joy and gladness in the breasts of the elect, this was the cause of that sudden joy infused into the blessed man. . . . (*The Saint learnt from the vision that on the night of the next Lord's Day he should pass away to the Lord.*)

"And so at the end of the same week on the Sabbath day (Saturday) he and his dutiful attendant, Diormit, go to bless the granary which was near by. And on entering it, when the Saint had blessed it and two heaps of corn stored up there, he uttered these words with his giving of thanks, saying: 'Greatly do I rejoice with the Brethren of my household that this year also, if I should perchance have to depart from you, you will have enough for the year without stint.' On Diormit promising to keep his secret the Saint continued: 'In the sacred volumes this day is called the Sabbath, which is interpreted Rest. And this day is truly a Sabbath day for me, because it is for me the last day of this present laborious life, on which I rest after the fatigues of my labours; and this night at midnight, when begins the solemn day of the Lord, according to the saying of the Scriptures, I shall go the way of my fathers.

For so it hath been revealed to me by the Lord Himself.'

"After this, the Saint returning to the monastery, sits down half-way at the place where afterwards a Cross fixed in the mill-stone, and standing to this day, is to be seen at the roadside. And while the Saint, weary with age, rested there, behold the white horse, a faithful servant, hastens up to him, the one which used to carry the milk pails to and fro between the byre and the monastery. He coming up to the Saint, wonderful to tell, lays his head against his breast—inspired as I believe by God—knowing that his master was soon about to leave him, and that he would see him no more. 'Let him alone,' said the Saint, 'for he loves me. . . . The Creator Himself has clearly in some way revealed to him that his master is about to go away from him.' And then, going on and ascending the knoll that overlooks the monastery, he stood for a little while on its top, and there standing, and raising both hands, he blessed his monastery.

"After this, coming down from the knoll and returning to the monastery, he sat in his hut transcribing the Psalter Ps. xxxiii. up to verse 11 in the Vulgate).

"'Here,' he said, 'I must stop at the foot of this page, and what follows let Baithene write.'

"The Saint then enters the church for the Vespers Mass of the vigil of the Lord's Day, and as soon as this is over, he returns to his cell and sits up throughout the night on his bed, where he had the bare rock for his pallet, and a stone for pillow. And so, sitting up, he gives his last commands to the brethren, his attendant alone hearing them, saying: 'These, my last words, I commend to you, O my sons, that ye have mutual and unfeigned charity among yourselves, with peace: and

if, according to the example of the Holy Fathers, ye shall observe this, God the Comforter of the good will help you; and I, abiding in Him, will intercede for you. . . .'

"Thus far are put down the last words of our venerable Patron as he was passing away from this weary pilgrimage to the heavenly country.

"After which, as the happy last hour gradually approached, the Saint was silent. Then, when the bell began to toll at midnight, rising in haste, he goes to the church, and running faster than the others, he enters it alone, and on bended knees falls down in prayer at the Altar. At the same moment Diormit, who followed him more closely, sees from a distance the whole church filled within with angelic light round about the Saint. Diormit, therefore, entering the church, cries out with mournful voice, 'Where art thou, Father?' And as the lights of the brethren had not yet been brought in, groping his way in the dark, he finds the Saint lying before the Altar, and raising him a little, and sitting down by him, he lays his holy head on his bosom. And meanwhile the Community of monks, running up with lights, began to weep at the sight of their dying Father. And as we have learnt from some who were there present, the Saint, his soul not yet departing, with open eyes upturned, looked round about on either side with wonderful cheerfulness and joy of countenance on seeing the holy Angels coming to meet him. Diormit then lifts up the holy right hand of the Saint that he may bless the choir of monks. But the venerable Father himself, at the same time, moved his hand as much as he was able, so that what was impossible for him to do with his voice at his soul's departure he might still do by the movement of his hand, namely, give his

blessing to the brethren. And after thus signifying his holy benediction, he immediately breathed forth his spirit. And it having left the tabernacle of the body, the face remained so ruddy and wonderfully gladdened by the vision of the Angels, that it seemed not to be that of one dead, but of one living and sleeping."

"O Home most blessed in the City above. O cloudless day of eternity; which no night obscures: Whose never setting sun is the Truth supreme; day ever joyful, ever secure: and never changing into its contrary.

"O Home most blessed in the City above. . . . To the saints indeed it shines glorious with unfailing brightness, but to pilgrims on the earth only afar off and as in a glass. The citizens of heaven know how joyful is that day, but the banished sons of Eve bewail the bitterness and weariness of this. . . .

"The days of this life are few and evil, full of sorrows and difficulties, where man is defiled by many sins, ensnared by many passions, held fast by many fears, racked by many cares. . . .

"O when shall these evils have an end, when shall I be freed from the miserable bondage of vices? When shall I be mindful of Thee alone? When shall I fully rejoice in Thee? . . . Good Jesu, when shall I stand to behold Thee? When shall I gaze upon the glory of Thy Kingdom? When wilt Thou be to me all in all? O when shall I be with Thee in Thy Kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for Thy beloved ones from all eternity? I am left a poor and banished man in the land of enemies, where there are daily wars, and great calamities. Comfort my banishment, assuage my sorrow, for my whole desire sighs after Thee.

"For all is a burden to me whatsoever the world offers for consolation. I long to enjoy Thee in my heart of hearts, but I cannot lay hold of Thee. I yearn to clasp the heavenly, but cares of earth and unmortified passions weigh me down. . . . O what do I inwardly suffer while in my mind I dwell on things heavenly, and presently a swarm of carnal thoughts besieges me while I pray. My God, be not Thou far from me; cast forth Thy lightning and disperse them; shoot out Thine arrows, and let all the vain fancies of the enemy be confounded. . . .

"Thou who art the Truth hast plainly said: '*For where thy treasure is, there thy heart is also.*' If I love heaven, I willingly muse on heavenly things. If I love the world, I rejoice with the felicity of the world, and grieve for the adversities thereof. If I love the flesh, I often imagine the things of the flesh. If I love the Spirit, I delight to think on things spiritual. . . .

"Son, when thou perceivest the desire of eternal bliss to be poured on thee from above, and longest to depart out of the tabernacle of the body, that thou mayest be able to gaze upon My brightness, open thy heart wide, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole desire. Give great thanks to the heavenly goodness which treats thee with such condescension, which visits thee with mercy, arouses thee to fervour, sustains thee with power, lest through thine own weight thou sink down to earthly things. . . .

"I know thy desire, and have often heard thy groans. Already thou longest to be in the freedom of the glory of the sons of God; already thou dost delight in the eternal home and joyful Fatherland of heaven; but that hour is not yet come; still there is another time, and that a time of war, of toil, of trial. Thou desirest to be filled with the Supreme Good, but thou canst

not reach it yet. I am; wait thou for Me, saith the Lord, until the Kingdom of God shall come. Thou art still to be tried upon earth, and to be disciplined in many things. . . . Be strong, therefore, as well in doing as in suffering what nature likes not. Put on the new man, and be changed into another man. . . .

"But consider, Son, the fruit of these toils, the end so near, and the reward exceeding great, and thou wilt not grudge to bear them, but wilt have in patience the strongest consolation. For, instead of that little of thy will which now thou willingly forsakest, thou shalt always have thy will in heaven. There shall thy will be ever one with Mine. There shall the fruit of obedience be seen, the labour of penance shall rejoice, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned."—[1]

To anyone seeking fellowship with us at Cowley at any time during the years of Father Benson's Superiorship or residence there, I believe nothing was so impressive as the aspect of the Father Founder himself in his place in the Mission House Chapel at Office. I think that what such a person would have recognized as extraordinary was just the manifestation of that spirit which we are thinking of—*the desire of God.* There was in every act of his devotion, in the recitation of every verse of the Psalms, a fervour of aspiration and longing of love and worship, that never flagged. It expressed a soul pressing on in every verse to reach its highest offering of its whole being to God, of all that it had of will-power, of love, of intelligence, with intensest personal devotion and reverent joy. An old coloured woman in a small congregation of poor people to whom he ministered in Boston, observed and under-

[1] à Kempis, "The Imitation of Christ," Bk. IV., chaps. 48, 49.

stood this characteristic, and thus expressed her wonder: "*He's always looking up, he's wearing himself out with looking up.*"

One of our Fathers observed this trait, and referred to it in a letter:

"*November 5th,* 1909.

"I have been saying Evensong with Father Benson. You know he never gets to Church now, not even in the house Chapel: but you should have heard him recite in the Psalter: '*One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require; even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His Temple.*' Had you heard him you would have known that his heart and will were in Church, even if his poor, worn body was not; and then you would have remembered that God '*dwelleth not in temples made with hands,*' but that He abides in His members, and they in Him. That which Father Benson '*desired*' and '*required,*' he had attained."

Dr. Pusey, in his sermon on the bliss of Heaven,[1] gives some answers to the question, "How can I be happy in Heaven?" He suggests that the doubt may arise "from a secret over-trust in ourself, as if our bliss in Heaven were to come from our own powers of loving God, instead of being filled with Himself, when He shall be all things in all, and we shall love Him with His own love, wherewith He shall first have filled us, in an endless flow and reflow of love, ever poured out anew on us, ever from us returning back to Him from whom it comes."

"'*When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.*' Then

[1] Preached at S. Saviour's, Leeds.

shall every hindrance to spiritual bliss cease." He concludes thus:

"Oh, defile we then no more that royal image, in which He formed us; which when sunk in the mire of sin He came to cleanse anew by His own Precious Blood; which He sought out so diligently, by toil and suffering; which He longs to shew on high rejoicing to His friends and neighbours in the heavenly courts. Let us come to Him and be enlightened, that our faces be not ashamed, looking in trust and penitence and hope and love, to His Divine Countenance, desiring that His Divine Features be one by one retraced on our souls. Let us long to be cleansed, and He will cleanse us, long for His Indwelling, and He will come to us; treasure His Sacred Presence when we have received It, and He will cleanse us more and more; let us hide no part of our sinful heart from Him, and He will by His light brighten the dark corners over which we grieve, and all sorrow or joy, dryness or refreshment, the light of His Presence or His seeming absence, shall but the more kindle our longing, and cleanse our souls for that unvarying, unspeakable Presence in bliss. '*We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.*'"

O Almighty God, Who hast knit together Thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

XXIV.

THE LAST SPIRITUAL RETREAT—SILENCE.

"In silentio et spe erit fortitudo vestra."—ISA. xxx. 15 (Vulg.).

I HAVE caught myself sometimes inwardly complaining of the growing solitude of life as old friends and relations passed from this world and left me more alone than ever. A silence falls upon the soul that is gradually withdrawn by infirmity of age from active companionship in work—a silence that I have been tempted to resent as an injury. "I have heard the wind in the poplar-trees, but hardly a human voice all day; not even a '*good morning*' or a '*good night*' has come to me." It is a help in such a mood to remember how in past times, when in the full stream of social activity in the world, we have longed to escape from it, and to taste for a moment the comfort of solitude and silence which we resent to-day when it comes to us by the will of God. We may have felt sometimes that our salvation almost depended on our getting away now and then in Retreat from the strife of tongues that never ceases in the active life. And now God is rewarding faithful activity by calling the soul on to Himself in quietness. It is for this more solemn Retreat of old age that our annual Retreat has long been preparing us—this last and best of Retreats that comes to us so gradually and

graciously, and in which God Himself will be the Conductor. When one thinks of it one can laugh at oneself for complaining to-day, when God sends it, of the solitude we have often desired and felt the need of in the past. And the more when we remember the thousands who in early days sought solitude in the desert, or the Celtic hermits who went far to seek silence in their stone cells in lonely islands in the Hebrides, whence there was nothing to be seen but the sky and the ocean, and where they were alone with God all the year.

It is interesting to find even in modern times what a great price men have gladly paid to gain the spiritual treasure of solitude for retirement and prayer. Here, for example, is a Russian Saint of the last century, who for the sake of communion with God kept absolute silence through a period equal to an average lifetime. Mr. Stephen Graham writes of him as follows :

" Seraphim, a Russian hermit Saint, was absolutely silent for thirty-five years. He was actually silent all the time that Napoleon was ravaging Russia. By this time Seraphim had obtained a name of great sanctity, and worked miracles of healing. ' They are burning our sacred shrines,' they cried ; ' Is it naught to thee, Father ? '

" But Seraphim was silent.

" Others said, ' Napoleon is Antichrist. Lead us, O Seraphim, against him in the Name of the Lord.' But Seraphim was silent. His face retained unchanged its look of exaltation ; his uplifted eyes still seemed bent on some unearthly vision ; his attentive ears to be listening to some other voices. The old monk never spoke a word. Napoleons might come and go, but the truth to which he was a witness remained unchanging, unchanged. And if Napoleon had come to Sarof and

pulled the hermitage down about Seraphim's ears, the old monk would still have prayed on in silence."[1]

Insensibly the years are leading us out of the conflicting interests, claims, appeals, eagernesses of life, the strife of tongues, into a quiet world of solitude and silence. Being no longer able to take our part in the general struggle of life in the world, the world leaves us alone. Too infirm perhaps to share in the exercises of a spiritual Retreat, God calls us aside that we may attend to Him in a Retreat in which He Himself is the Conductor.

So there are long hours in the day now in which I find myself alone, and see no one. I resolve that I will never complain of this, but recognize the purpose and care of the Chief Shepherd Who provides this Retreat for me, and leads me forth by these quiet waters.

Or it may be that being in the company of others amid the liveliness of general conversation, deafness leaves me alone in an awkward silence. I feel the constraint of being against my will a non-conductor of geniality, and wish that I could disappear unobserved. Then, perhaps, I shall find that I am deprived of the opportunity of contributing to the general cheerfulness in order to discover another function given to me instead, and I may learn to forget myself and the constraint of my position, and reverence the Presence of God in my companions and in myself. Thus I might without observation prove in my silence a link for them with the eternal Truth and the infinite Love. If deafness separates me from my brethren, it is only an outward separation, and for the moment, and gives occasion for a closer fellowship in Christ through prayer.

[1] "The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary," by Stephen Graham, pp. 127-8.

Or, again, I remember that when I have been alone in times past, nature has been wont sometimes to speak to me, and fill me with happiness too great for words. But now as eyesight begins to fail me, the sun, the moon, and the stars, grow dim for me ; " they that look out of the windows are darkened."[1] Through this dimness the voices of nature no longer reach me. The sun rises and sets, and the bright stars come out, but they say nothing to me now. I remember " the hour of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower," but I no longer hear the canticle of the creatures ; the daughters of music are brought low, and I am left to myself in silence. And now in the stillness I become aware of One Who lures me into the wilderness in order that He Himself may speak to my heart. The silence is strange : I must rouse myself and stand to hear what the Lord will say to me. As I awake to listen in stillness and serenity of soul, all my past life,

> " The noisy years, seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal Silence."

The silence that enfolds me in this solitude is the Eternal Love, and I no longer want His messengers, the creatures, to speak to me of Him, for God has come to speak to me, and His message is Himself.

Our Lord will not describe His disciples as servants, but because He has opened all His heart to them He chooses to call them His friends. And of friendship silence is often as true a token and expression as conversation can be. It is only true friends who can be silent and happy when together ; they have sometimes no need of words, for all is known and shared by both. If we are to learn the real value of silence, and to love

[1] Eccl. xii. 3.

it, there are two considerations in the Gospel that are specially helpful:

1. *The silence of the Incarnate Word in infancy.*

There is real significance and value in the silence of any little child whose eyes follow his mother and look up into her eyes. He cannot speak; all that he has in his heart is that which speech can never give—love. The silent love of the Holy Child in Mary's arms—a love embracing the whole world that He is come to save—is no dreamy, self-pleasing sentiment, but an energy that in its silence goes on to God, holds God, and takes us all up to Him in its prayer.

I have known an example of that kind of silence in an invalid confined to her bed, and rarely able to see visitors, and so spending life mainly alone. Half of every day she spent in intercession, the other half in work of correspondence for foreign missions. *There* was a life of great silence that guarded, not a selfish retirement, but the energy of love going on continually to God, and pleading for the conversion of the world.

This silent love is one of the ways in which spiritual advance, real transformation of life, is possible for us as we grow old. One might say, I cannot read much, or attend many Church Services, or I cannot understand the spiritual books that help others, or follow their spiritual methods. I seem incapable of advancing towards God in such ways. But by God's mercy I think I know what it is to love God, though I have so little ready to say to Him. I know that He is Love, but words cannot reach love, nor bring love to me. But love comes down to me from God more straight and swiftly than any words can. In silence I can sometimes welcome the Eternal Love, and give my whole

being to Him, as a little child gives all his love to his mother before he can speak a word.

2. Or we may remember an incident of the Last Supper told by S. John: "There was at the table reclining in Jesu's bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved."[1] Words may be a help for a soul that finds itself far off from love, enabling it to make its approach to God. But when it has approached, when it is resting in the bosom of Jesus, words are not always wanted. The talk of the world is generally the mutual exchange of ideas, the mind's market-wares, often trivial things, between persons separated in heart. The speaker brings forth in words whatever subject happens to turn up on the surface of life, and contrives to pass the time, but leaves the treasure of the heart absolutely hidden. The hearer takes what is offered with courtesy, and pays back in words of no greater consequence, and so time is passed, but neither gets a glimpse into the heart of the other. They talk in order to hide the habitual and infinite separation that divides them. Silence for them means an awkward confession of mutual incapacity of being interested in each other. The transcendently perfect human soul and His beloved—Christ and the blessed John leaning on His breast, can mutually share all that each of them is. And it is mainly in silence that this mutual exchange of love is accomplished.

But silence may have an evil significance, the silence of a heart separated from God by rebellion, the silence of the desert in which Satan hides. There is a silence of helpless disapproval, unuttered protest against injustice which cannot be resisted, suffered with inward storm of resentment and bitterness. It may be a righteous protest, but it is wrong to stop short of the

[1] S. John xiii. 23.

fellowship of Christ. "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."[1] Silence is perhaps right under the circumstances, but it should be the silence of love suffering wrong, and resting on Jesu's bosom—love united to His heart, sharing His pain of sacrifice, and losing all bitterness. Religious silence is that which the soul reaches when it has passed through all protests, anxieties, resentments, bitternesses, and finds liberty and repose in communion with God.

Father Benson in the rule that he gave to his Community is impressive in regard to the place and power of silence in Religion. He wrote for us, "Silence is one of the chief joys of the Religious, and imparts to all his actions strength, tranquillity, and perfection. For in silence the soul holds blessed communion with God, feeds upon the grace of past sacraments, contemplates the true hope of the eternal reward, and rises up to the demands of the Divine will in the joyous correspondence of grateful love."

Silence is an eloquent expression of the life dedicated to God in Religion, besides being a valuable exercise in the self-surrender and recollection which it implies. But Richard Rolle, the hermit, has much more than that to say for silence. Writing of the man of prayer, the contemplative, he says, "God he praises in song, but yet in silence: not to men's ears, but in God's sight he yields praises with marvellous sweetness." Again, "An unseen joy has come to me, and I have verily waxed warm within with the fire of love; the which has taken my heart from these low things, so that singing in Jesu full far have I flown from outward melody to full inward." Again, "I have shown why I fled strangers in the kirks, and desired not to hear

[1] Eph. iv. 26.

organ players. Truly they gave me letting from songful sweetness, and gart fail the full clear song. . . . I had great liking to sit in the wilderness that I might sing more sweetly far from noise, and with quickness of heart I might feel sweetest praise, which doubtless, I have received of His gift, Whom, above all things, I have wonderfully loved."

Father Benson writes in another place, that "Silence is the complement of praise; the silence of Religious is never mere repression of sound. It is like the pause in music, out of which the music springs new-born. In that silence the music has come to a new life. Leave out the pauses in singing or saying the Divine Office, and you leave out its life; it becomes but a weary burden of unmeaning sounds weighing upon the ear. Our devotion absolutely requires the pauses that Religious silence brings to it.

"In this continually recurring silence we come apart from distraction; it is our daily Retreat. We put aside for the time all words, that we may listen for the Eternal Word—Jesus who called us, and Whose continual calling, as He goes on speaking to the listening heart, constitutes our vocation, and gives its meaning to all that we do, or bear, as Religious.

"In this silence in which self ceases to speak, and the world is shut out, we come into the Presence of God. And there we find the abyss of our own unworthiness. Gaining here a sense of it, we hush our whole being in the silence of adoration before the All-Holy, the Altogether Lovely, the Eternal Majesty. And it is out of this silence of self-condemnation, and adoration of God, that we awake to praise God, and take our part in the choir of heaven. Out of silence springs the praise of the Night Office; out of silence Lauds awakes

us; silence enshrines the Holy Mysteries; we come from silence to the Altar; we return from the Altar into silence. In silence we go to the House of God, and return in silence.

"Our thanksgiving for the grace of Retreat leads to silence, because it is a Divine seed, the seed of a new life on which our eternity will depend, sown in us. It needs the night of silence that we may realize in recollection what we are, what God is, what He has said to us, what He has done for us. We take the fruit of our Retreat into silence; it is the mystery of the summer night after rain, enfolding, cherishing the seed sown, calling forth the hidden life in the germ. Our thanksgiving after Retreat dies into silence of a grateful love which is beyond words—and of a reverent fear lest we should lose the gift by forgetting to cherish it, act upon it, secure it.

"Think of silence as belonging to death. Self is clamorous as long as it lives—like birds on the roof that never for an instant cease their weary little chatter about trifles. If at last self has not one word to say, it is because it has come into the Presence of God, and is dead. In this silence of a holy death to self the life of God comes forth, and utters itself without words.

"Without this silence the Religious Life were but a bit of worldly and pretentious benevolence. For in the continual utterance of words the life of man is frittered away, all good exhausts itself, becomes unreal and even absurd. But in Religious silence we hide the Divine gift, so that nothing of the treasure is lost; we recognize the reality of all we are called to do or bear, we pass from self and our work to Him for whom we do it—from things of the moment into the welcome of eternity.

"So if we are to think of the highest meaning of Religious silence, it will be a discipline, a school of contemplation, the simplest kind of prayer, to which all true prayer and praise tend to lead on; the prayer which is holy love, which does not speak, but loves. Silence, however it comes into our life, is to teach us, and is to mean, holy love. In the silence of holy love we pour out to God, not intellectual considerations, not points for meditation, but our whole being,—that in us which is deeper and higher than words. In devout words we get a certain religious gratification for ourselves. The intellect is interested, cheered, nourished. But in the prayer of silence we forget our own gain, and go forth to God Himself, and surrender all we are and have, simply to live before Him, and love. In silence we listen for the voice of God, we act in the simple power of God, we welcome the manifestation of God. In simple waiting upon God is the greatest attainment of the creature."

The mystery of silence is implied in the "white stone" of which the Spirit speaks to the Churches, and in the stone "a new Name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."[1] Let us not think that that Name could be told in words. In the silence of each religious day we go where the soul can only go alone—down into the reality of things, into its own relations to God in Christ. And this recurring silence is enjoined in Religion in order to form a certain habit of universal quietness, reserve, recollection which establish the necessary condition for communion with God, and contemplation. The world thinks silence waste of time; for it the development of ideas by expression, and the convenience of the moment attained

[1] Rev. ii. 17.

by work are everything. But the Religious is dedicated, not to the development of ideas and material convenience, but to the concentration of every faculty upon the one only reality, God, Who is Love. So Religious silence does not express the barrenness of life, but its wealth. It does not mean, "I have nothing to say, I am thinking of nothing," but "I am thinking upon God, and am silent, because I find that He is all things to me."

Think of the effect of this habit of Religious silence, this suppression of needless effervescence of words, in our daily life. Some of us have observed this in the ordinary behaviour of good Religious. They are quite ready to say what business, truth, kindness, fraternal love require, but there is no effervescence of words; no words are said that could not glorify God, could not cheer or comfort anyone, could only gratify self-love. If we are really trying to keep Religious silence in the contemplation of God, our daily life will be lived under this law of Religion, and we shall be sheltered from many sins. The conventual inclosure, how much of the world it keeps out! but our silence will be an inner spiritual line of defence much more effectual still.

Think of the silence of Jesus in His infancy, unwilling to speak though He knew all things—His silence from good words for thirty years. Think of His three years' active ministry—a ministry exercised much more in holy deeds than in sacred words. And then when He spoke it was only when words were wanted in charity, or to the glory of God. If we love the silence of Jesus, we shall learn the prayer of Jesus. When we see some wrong done we do most good to the wrong-doer by praying for him, and that involves our silence. Silence is not really silent unless it has withdrawn in

its prayer from self to God. There are people whose silence wounds or irritates us, and others whose silence is balm. The silence that does us good is the atmosphere of a heart that lives in communion with God, the Eternal Love.

An ancient Father[1] summarizes the function of silence in the Christian life: "The habit of mental silence is the mother of prayer, a recalling from exile and bondage to liberty, a recognizing of the fire of Divine love, a watch-tower against the enemy; it sends grief to prison; it is the friend of holy tears, a secret journey to God, and an invisible ascent to Heaven."

If old age tends to withdraw from the strife of tongues and needless talk, it is not to be ascribed to any loss of interest in truth, but to a deepened desire to hold the truth, and to commune with the truth. This characteristic appears in the old age of S. John the Apostle, for whom no formula of words expresses the truth, but a life. His last sermon was complete in a single sentence. Let his flock practise that, and they would find in its practice all they needed to learn. It is to S. John that we owe the phrase, "*Doing the truth.*" The true man is not he who has a scientifically correct formula of words by which to express truth, but the man who doeth the truth, whose whole life is its expression. Many words seemed necessary in youth in order to bear witness to the truth; now in old age life seems to express it better without words. The old Christian is doing the truth of which he could in youth talk eagerly, but which now lies appropriated and secure, affirmed by the faithful tenor of a life of few words.

It is interesting to find this characteristic of the aged

[1] Climacus.

Apostle appearing in his disciple, S. Ignatius the Martyr, who writes: "It is better to keep silence and yet to be, than to talk and not to be. It is good to teach, if he that sayeth doeth. He who has gotten to himself the word of Jesus truly is able to hear the silence of Jesus also, so that he may act through that which he speaks and be known through the things wherein he is silent. Let us therefore do all things as in His Presence Who dwelleth in us, that we may be His temple, and that He may be in us our God."[1]

[1] S. Ignatius, Ep. to Ephesians, § 5.

XXV.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

DEATH is the name we use for the momentous change that we are each daily approaching from life under the present conditions that we know, to life under new and higher conditions as yet unknown to us. To prepare for such a momentous change is obviously a serious purpose for old age. If death is our passage from one stage of life to a higher, it is clear that all our days from the first might have been a preparation for death; we are sure that all the years of our life past will have their influence on the great change when it comes; and we are conscious that our life has not always been so true to God's grace as to gather no clouds to darken the last feeble steps of our journey. But now in age we are released from many cares and works in order that in the quiet evening of life we may seek counsel of God how to repair past neglect, to deepen our penitence, and be prepared for our last and completest act of surrender to God.

In preparing for a good death we do not morbidly keep in view the humiliating physical circumstances that belong to our change. It is not unconsciousness, decay, nothingness that we are advancing towards; we are preparing to go to God, to be with God for ever, as He made us, and re-made us for Himself, and as

we may have responded, or failed to respond, to His grace. True preparation for death, therefore, will be our learning to exercise that gift of the new, the higher life in Christ. To be growing in Christian character is obviously the truest preparation for a Christian death. We are preparing for death, not by thinking of death, but by thinking of God, and developing our life here in Him and to Him.

It is a serious thought how I might have made all my life a preparation for a holy death, but already most of it has passed, and it has not been so. Of the short time that remains let me begin to make a sincere and earnest use for the highest purpose of all. I dare not calculate on an eleventh hour in which to turn from an undecided life to God with a prudent act of repentance. True repentance is the act of love, and pure love does not calculate chances, but always gives itself *now* to the Beloved. The present moment is all that it is sure of, and it makes haste to give that with its whole self to God.

Besides, if the process of dying is to entail some new discipline of pain and distress, as sometimes by the will of God it does, we need, in order to get their full blessing, to train our spirit beforehand in the habit of firm faith in God, of fortitude in bearing trials, of hope that looks through them, of love that welcomes the Beloved and His will in them.

Perhaps S. Paul would say, "Be dying daily to self, and all that separates us from God, and when death comes to look for you it will find you gone, you will be dead already, your life hid with Christ in God."

But what is most to be observed in the lives of Saints in regard to preparation for death is that it is

no stiffening of courage to meet a catastrophe, but an habitual looking for Christ's coming, the longing of love to welcome the clearer revelation of our Lord to the soul. The details of the process of dying are little or nothing to the mind that is filled with the supreme desire of the vision of God, Who is Love.

This expectation was a special characteristic of the life of the late Bishop Wilkinson of S. Andrews. In the second volume of Canon Mason's life of him (page 426) we read:

"After his operation he expressed thankfulness that he had been spared so that the prayer that he had soffered ever since he was a yonng man might be fulfilled, *i.e.* that he might be living, if it was God's will, when our Lord appeared. The one longing of his life was ever that he might be fit to meet his Lord, and to show carefulness in the minutest details of preparation for the Coming. From that day, and in fact all his life, each day, he seemed to be expecting the Coming, and as the season of Advent came round, he seemed more expectant then ever."

Again Canon Mason quotes the prayer that follows, found among his notes and papers:

"*Easter*, 1901.

"S. Luke xiv. 33. ἀποτάσσεσθαι 'bid farewell.'

"In Thy strength I bid farewell to all my ὑπάρχοντα.[1] The past, O God, Thou knowest. I leave it at Thy feet. . . .

"To bid farewell to health, strength, bodily and mental vigour—all this is before me, unless the Lord's Advent be hastened. Prepare me for this—not too quickly, O my Lord, but step by step, so that step by step I may receive strength to respond to Thy Divine

[1] Things pertaining to me.

call—to leave *all*, all that is dear on earth, and to go out alone to Thee."

The following Advent prayer expresses the same habitual longing:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Who has taught us in Thy holy Word, that in an hour when we think not the Son of Man cometh, enable me by Thy Holy Spirit so steadfastly and without all doubt to believe Thy Word, that I may ever live as those who are watching for the appearing of their Lord. Spare me, if it be Thy blessed will, the pains of death. Send forth Thy angels, and gather me to Thyself in the day of Thy glorious manifestation. I know that Thou art near to me. I know that at any moment the veil may be withdrawn, and that I may see Thee and know Thee even as I am known. Let the thought of Thy appearing cheer me in every trial, and comfort me in every perplexity, and so uplift me above the things of time and sense, that I may in heart and mind ascend day by day, and with Thee continually dwell. O Lord, my Saviour, though I see Thee not, I desire to love Thee. Though I see Thee not, yet believing I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. O glorious day, which may be so near, when the light shall break on the everlasting hills, when I shall see Thee and know Thee, and be able to love Thee with a perfect love in that eternal and glorious Kingdom, where Thou art with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end.

"'Behold, I come quickly. Even so come, Lord Jesus.'"

In Mgr. Baunard's "Le Vieillard," there is an interesting passage in regard to preparation for death. He writes:[1]

[1] Le Vieillard, par Mgr. Baunard, sixième edition, p. 376.

"I remember three words given to us in a Retreat instruction at the University. The conductor told us that the Christian soul ought to welcome death by the three acts of faith, hope, and charity. Act of Faith: I believe in death; I shall die, that is justice, the wages of sin. Act of Hope: I hope in death; I shall live again, free from all evil, enriched with all good. God will have mercy upon me. Act of Charity: I love and adore in death the will of Him Who died for me, and to Whom in turn I offer myself as a sacrifice of love.

"S. François de Sales bids us, in preparing for death, say good-bye to the world; we must withdraw, he writes, our affections one by one from the creatures. If one wants to transplant a tree to another soil, one must dexterously disengage each little root one after another. And since from this world we are to be transplanted to the land of the living, we must withdraw our affections from the earth.

"All this separation from persons and things is to be effected lovingly. Père Gratry compares this last farewell to the little child's *bon soir*, who, before going off to bed, goes the round of all the company to present his face to each for a kiss and *good night*.

"The great secret and motive of detachment from everything is the love of God, Who alone is worthy to be loved above all. I will quote here Michael Angelo's last verses written when almost ninety years old. 'Never,' writes M. Rio, 'did this rare genius appear greater than in this last period of his life, not as painter, sculptor, architect, but as a man of God, who, well aware as he was of his dignity in the presence of those among whom he lived, considered it his highest glory to humble himself before Him. The last sonnet that he sent to

Vasari, his song of the swan, was a solemn farewell to the art, which he reproached himself with having idolized.'

"'All is vanity,' he wrote, 'including sculpture and painting, things incapable of fully satisfying a soul once it has tasted Divine love. All is vanity, all, except the happiness of loving God, and the honour of serving Him.' He was just then finishing the plan and model of the cupola of S. Peter's, in his eighty-ninth year.

"Or nearer to our own times, here is the venerable Auguste Nicolas writing to a friend: 'The earth is forsaking us, happy the soul that has wings! Our generation vanishes and we hang on still like the few dead leaves at the tip of the tree's branches that the first gust of wind will presently whirl away. At our age everything warns us of our departure. So, dear friend, we will be beforehand with it. Let us so thoroughly give ourselves up to the true Life, that when death comes for us, it shall find us gone!'

"Nearer still to our own times, Mgr. Gay writes, in 1884, to his friend, the Curé of S. Etienne du Mont: 'For me more than for you, old age has come. May I tell you? I cannot write this word without feeling a smile of sweet surprise in my soul. . . . I feel so young inwardly; so young that it is almost like childhood. Of course I realize that I have been a traveller for many years on the earth, and have seen many things. That makes one thoughtful, grave sometimes, sometimes sad; one is ripe, one has gained experience; yes, but what is the fruit of all that? It is just a greater evidence that God is all in all, that I am very near my last end, that time is almost nothing, and reality is the spiritual life, that is eternal life already begun. So clear is this

evidence that one feels altogether free, altogether detached, full of energy, ready to spring upward, full of agility to get through difficulties, full of quietness to let go what is going, filled through and through, in short, with God : and this is just old age ! '

" In 1891 Mgr. Gay feels its touch in his seventieth year. He writes to his heart's brother : ' Dear friend, old age is no longer coming to me ; it has come, and with its body-guard of pains. Those about me are unwilling to see in them warnings of my going hence. I say nothing, but inwardly I am as a bird on a branch ; I shall not need two calls before I take wing. For me everything is gone already, and there is nothing left here but hunger of spirit. . . . Patience, dear friend, evening is coming on, and the Master stands at the door ; soon He will knock, and neither you nor I will keep Him waiting before we open to Him. For so many years we have been saying to Him, Come, Lord Jesus.'

" A little later came his ' good-bye,' and he wrote to the same friend, ' I am no longer on earth, but like a traveller who has packed up his luggage, and is waiting for his carriage. Perhaps I shall have to wait some years for it, who knows ? Anyhow, I shall not unpack my luggage.'

" That is enough. We too, my brother, let us pack up our luggage as did the wise men of the East, when they were about to start on their journey to find the King of kings. Let us put into our packing-cases our treasures as they did, as the Gospel tells, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, that is the virtues that these gifts symbolize. And then let us start on our way ; the time has come. For the star appearing in Heaven signals to us—the star which is the will of God."

XXVI.

MOTHER HARRIET, FOUNDRESS OF THE CLEWER COMMUNITY.

I RESERVE for the last pages what I am allowed to borrow from Canon Carter's "Memoir of the First Mother of the Clewer Community." I have here the advantage of my personal recollection both of the subject and of the writer. I think no good words that could be said of the virtues specially belonging to old age, could compare for weight and interest with the sketch that the Warden gives us of that dear lady, and I know of no example of those virtues, and particularly of hope, that is so beautiful and cheering. As one reads what she wrote or said one has to supply by memory the vivacity, the quick Irish humour and play, the generosity, the intuition and intelligence, as well as the tone of a spirit that lived in prayer, that her presence brought to us; and all this expressed in the accent of the finest Irish refinement.

The last years of that noble life will be found in the later chapters of the memoir; but before coming to them I venture to borrow a few passages from the earlier pages. In her own experience of extreme weakness she wrote to a friend in an advanced state of serious illness: "I love to think of you standing on the threshold of the land of rest—the Home we love and long for.

When you get there if you meet my beloved you will know what to tell him of me. For twenty years that we have stood, one on this side, and one on that side of the veil, we have never been parted; and now the meeting time must be getting near, though I know that he loves that I should stay here God's time to do His work. God bless you, dear. Keep your faith very steadfast, and your hope very bright, and your love ever resting on Him Who is Love; then you need not fear to pass through the dark valley alone."

A friend whom she helped writes: "One of her rules for me was, 'Try to do little things for God's glory without letting anyone know.'" She adds, "When Mother went to chapel to pray, she rose in the deep stillness of the night, and crept alone to the Altar, and remaining there poured out her tried soul to God. One could say of her, not only 'looking unto Jesus,' but 'looking from Jesus'; she saw all life from such a grand standpoint. Obstacles (so-called) she did *not* see. 'Don't look aside,' she used to say, 'look upwards and in His light you will see light.'"

Here is a word of genuine Christian experience specially cheering in our days, when to be a Churchman seems to mean chiefly to be a critic of the Church. "I doubt not, dear friend," she writes, "if I had to listen to the voice of the world, I should feel as deeply tired as you do, with all the controversies that beset us. But God having sent me other sorrow, and called me apart to minister to the sorrows of others, has rather enabled me to rejoice in all the rest and blessedness that can be found in our Church, than to be troubled with its divisions."

After being obliged to resign her office through failing health, she wrote: "I know you will help me by your

prayers on entering on a new stage of my life. It is to him that overcometh that the blessings of the intimate life of union are granted, and I feel the need of watchfulness in a life that must have greater relaxation in it." Again: "My one exhortation to the Sisters is not to let the sparkle of joy be clouded in the Community. I love that in a life of sacrifice they should give God a joyous service. If God spares me to do anything more for Him, I hope to be allowed to live in those two rooms upstairs in the Hospital, and to work a little among the sick children."

What most struck the Sister who watched by her at this time was the inward work she ceaselessly carried on by her life of intercessory prayer. This became a more and more strongly marked feature of her life, as increasing weakness compelled her to drop more and more of the outward life. "She often told me," wrote a Sister, "that she felt she had done a more real work for God while sitting 'stuck to my chair' than in all her busy active years."

The remembrance of the Mother's last visit to Clewer was a source of unceasing pleasure to her in her Retreat at Folkestone. Her many old associations were reviewed there with great delight, as she sat in the bright little garden on lovely summer evenings, revelling in the glorious sunset tints on the sea. Dr. Pusey's last volume of sermons—the "Rule of S. Benedict"—in an old French copy, Maurice's lectures on the "Religious of the World," and Montalembert's "Monks of the West," were among the books she read at this time.

A friend noted down after her visits what the Mother had said, and from her notes I take what follows:

"People often waste all their energies," she said, "in running about doing active work, and think that

they serve God in this way, while all the time they neglect the inner life of communion with Him which alone makes their work worth anything in His sight. We must not rob God. Remember, He has the first claim on our being; our aim must be to think of Him, to live for Him, to be always trying to please Him. The Divine Life must be shown forth in us. Our desire must be to manifest the life of God in our body, soul, and spirit; and to let others see that our lives are really given to God, whether living in the world, or in a Sisterhood. This must be a great reality, there must be no mistake about it. Our work on earth must be simply to lead the holiest life we possibly can for God.

"If we give ourselves to God without reserve, to live and work for Him, there is no doubt that He gives us special spiritual power. But if we wish for this power, we must keep in close communion with Him; we must keep regular times for prayer and meditation. It is well to have a time-table, for God will require an account of our time, and we must bring order and method into the arrangement of the day. Set apart certain stated times for communion with God, and keep to them as much as possible. Let this come first, but this done, return to social life as easily and naturally as possible. Be merry and happy with all around you, and throw yourself heartily into whatever they are doing. . . .

"We must try to serve the Lord with all gladness. Happiness and brightness in God's service is a great gift, and one that wins others to Him. We are told to 'make melody in our hearts to the Lord,' and how can we do this unless we are bright and cheerful, and serve Him gladly? What I want to impress upon you is that you must *live* the *life*, not merely do the work. Live a quiet peaceful life, alone with God, stayed on

Him, and the work will come out of it. You will then do it simply, unconsciously. Try to keep yourself perfectly free, and ready for Him to use you."

One thing that distressed her much was to hear people assure her that others were not true, when they happened to differ from them. "I cannot bear," she said, "to hear them say this. I always tell them it is only because they do not see things from the same point of view. We are like travellers going up a mountain, those higher up can see a very different view from those lower down."

Gradually failing, she received the Holy Communion in her room on her last Maundy Thursday, and sent a special Easter message to the Sisters as to their revealing the mind of Christ. "This," she said, "you know is the key-note of your whole life, and of your Rule; without it your Rule is dead, for it is the very kernel of it, and has been the one aim of all my teaching." On Good Friday one could see the shadow of death resting upon her, but stripped of all its terrors; and while in spirit she knelt at the foot of the Cross that day, her conformity with the will of God was manifest. She was going "home," she said, "I have gazed and gazed for thirty-three years at the land within the veil. I seem to have lived much more there than here."

As the Vicar on his last visit on Easter Eve bid her "Good-bye," she said to him, "Easter is a lovely time to go home, is it not?" We said the First Vespers for Easter Day. She joined joyfully, saying, "I have been longing for those Vespers all day." Unconsciousness came on Easter morning, and the Vicar commended her spirit into the Hands of her Heavenly Father, to Whom she passed at 6.30 a.m., as the early

Easter Communicants at the Parish Church close by were kneeling at the Altar and praying for her. Thus a life full of conflict, toil, and suffering passed to rest on the bosom of God, " in peace secure and undisturbed, a security of blessedness whose very foundation is the immutability of God."[1]

[1] Extracts from " Harriet Monsell, a Memoir," by the Rev. T. T. Carter. J. Masters & Co. 1884.

XXVII.

HOME.

THE flight of time, which is little observed and has little significance for others, becomes sometimes to those who are growing old a terror. The weeks, the months, the years, that used to seem interminable because so full of hourly interest, hope, and result, now in their emptiness impress one as might the rush of vast machinery at full work without any material to work upon. Besides, the old man feels that this rush of time passing is something that is going on within himself, the terrible advance of decay that is bringing him rapidly to his end. It is fearful, as it forces him to face the eternal unknown.

The awakening of this fear in our later years is felt in the ninetieth Psalm:

> "Thou turnest man to dust;
> And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
> For a thousand years in Thy sight
> Are but as yesterday when it is past,
> And as a watch in the night.
> Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath:
> We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told.
> The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
> Or even by reason of strength fourscore years;
> Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow;
> For it is soon gone, and we fly away."

The Venerable Bede writes in his chronicle that "At the Witan or council assembled by Edwin of Northumbria at Godmundingham, to debate on the mission of Paulinus, the King was thus addressed by a heathen thane, one of his chief men: 'The present life of man, O King, may be likened to what often happens when thou art sitting at supper with thy thanes and nobles in winter-time. A fire blazes on the hearth, and warms the chamber; outside rages a storm of wind and snow; a sparrow flies in at one door of thy hall, and quickly passes out at the other. For a moment, and while it is within, it is unharmed by the wintry blast, but this brief season of happiness over, it returns to that wintry blast whence it came, and vanishes from thy sight. Such is the brief life of man; we know not what went before it, and we are utterly ignorant as to what shall follow it. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains anything more certain, it justly deserves to be followed.'"

The heathen thane expressed very well the instinctive human fear of the unknown future. Something within the soul dreads the infinite void out of which it came to itself, and to which it seems to be returning so fast. It assures itself that there must have been something more than vacancy from which, with all its wonderful faculties, it came, and to which for some purpose or other it must return after all. In himself man finds this instinctive refusal to believe in death as his end, this need of immortality; but neither in himself, nor in nature does he find anything to justify this refusal or to satisfy his need. No answer comes thence to his dark question, "Whence came I? Whither am I going?" He seems to himself like the frightened bird that has lost its way, and flies through the lighted

hall for a moment, out of the dark and into the dark. It is lost and confused, but having seen the light it knows that it was not created for darkness, storm, and emptiness.

This same Psalm, expressing the soul's need of the home from whence it came—the home that waits to receive it back, reveals also magnificently the truth that the eternal home certainly exists, that its door is ever open to all the souls that were made for it, and that their home is not earth, nor Paradise, nor even Heaven, but God Himself.

> "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place
> In all generations.
> Before the mountains were brought forth,
> Or ever the earth and the world were made,
> Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

The revelation that God Himself is the "Dwelling-place," the Home for every human soul, is amazing; it transcends all natural hopes, all loftiest dreams. It is not merely that God is found to have in store a purpose worthy of Himself for all of us whom He created in His image, and a happy place of rest somewhere near Himself, sometime or other; but that God is Himself the resting-place for each regenerate soul—God Himself is his Home, his supreme blessedness this very day, and here where he stands. As we contemplate the mystery in silence it dilates before us. God Himself is indeed the true end, the refuge, the home of your soul and mine—God Himself without any reserve at all, in His perfect beatitude. The mutual love of the Three Blessed Persons is in Christ communicated to be the joy of the redeemed soul, as far as each is prepared to receive it, even now in this world. We have it in the very words our Lord spoke on the night of His Passion,

"That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."[1] In the twilight of the Old Testament the hope of it was like the anticipation of sunrise. Here it is in our Psalm, "O satisfy us in the morning with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil."

But for us, the children of the Resurrection, the sun is risen, and in Christ "we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,"[2] according to His promise. "These things have I said unto you that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."[3] God's love, God's joy communicated to us in Christ, is not that enough to constitute our eternal "Dwelling-place," our Home, found in God? But the prophet in the Psalm foresees more blessedness still: "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us": there is all our old disgrace taken away through the cleansing of the Precious Blood, and the soul new-dressed in the very beauty of God instead ("Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ"[4]). It remind's us of the lost son's welcome home, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Christ's beauty recognized in His members, Christ's likeness, Christ Himself clothing, consecrating, and making beautiful all that they do and suffer in God, for God.

The same mystery of God Himself as the Eternal Home of human souls appears again in Ps. xci. 1, under an aspect of special intimacy and delight: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"; and again in Ps. xxv. 14: "The secret of the Lord is with them

[1] S. John xvii. 26
[2] 1 Peter i. 8.
[3] S. John xv. 11.
[4] Rom. xiii. 14.

that fear Him." The secret of the Lord communicated to them implies the highest favour conceivable, the opening of His heart to them: an intimacy between the soul and God still more clearly expressed in the New Testament, as where S. Paul writes: "Our life is hid with Christ in God."[1] Here we touch the soul's privilege in God of sharing the most intimate divine counsels, here is the very ideal of *Home*. And this Home, this intimacy, "this privacy of glorious light," the Christian soul finds in God, according to our Lord's words: "I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."[2] Things hidden from the angels are made known unto the least of His friends.[3] The mystery of the personal individual love of the Saviour and His beloved is often alluded to in the Bible under the figure of a secret shared by two lovers. Each soul is created diverse from every other with a view to this most intimate love known only to God and the soul He created for Himself. "To Him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving Him that receiveth it."[4]

And further, this secret place of most intimate communion between God and the soul is inviolable, our only place of absolute security. "The Name (the Being) of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe."[5] If the years follow hard upon me and threaten to rob me of all that is dear to me, and I reach the open door of this fortress which is God, my Eternal Home, they can rob me of nothing I care for,

[1] Col. iii. 13. [2] S. John xv. 15. [3] Cf. 1 Pet. i. 12.
[4] Rev. ii. 17. [5] Prov. xviii. 10

for God Himself is all things to me, and all that is His He makes to be mine. "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine."[1]

In that secret and strong place the Christian soul "dwelleth." By the power of the Holy Spirit since his Baptism he is settled, established, at home there. We are sure of this from our Lord's words, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches; abide in Me,"[2] from S. Paul's words so often recurring, "We are in Christ" and S. John's, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."[3] God is the natural *place* of the new-born soul. This is naïvely expressed by an ancient commentator, Pico della Mirandola: "*God created the earth for beasts to inhabit, the seas for fishes, the air for fowls, and Heaven for Angels and stars. So that man hath no place to dwell and abide in, but God alone.*" The proper sphere of the soul is God, to which sphere grace has raised it already in Christ, and there it is to abide at all times, though in the flesh each of us has to trudge along a little further on our earthly pilgrimage. The wings of the Holy Dove may sometimes sensibly bear us there in our contemplation, but by faith we can in heart and mind thither ascend at all times, and with Him continually dwell. Our citizenship is in Heaven already, but we look forward to the day when we shall enter there, and go no more out.

In the meantime, however far from this centre the distractions of the moment may have swept us, it is well, as soon as we can, to return home to our rest in God, to abide and take deeper root there. Only God Himself is the centre of our being, our rest, our Home. We do not find it in any logical defence of the Catholic Creed, however satisfactory. The human spirit created for God Himself can find no rest in that world of logic.

[1] S. Luke xv. 13. [2] John xv. 4. [3] 1 John iv. 16.

To be ever so sure of our orthodoxy leaves us still as far off as ever. Not the most eloquent and touching development of Christian ideas can prove the soul's rest. Considerations drawn from Holy Scripture about God and His love do not satisfy us. They may be a help to prayer, but prayer does not stop in them, but seeking the Life itself, the Eternal Love, passes through them all into the Divine Presence, and further still, into the Heart of God.

My God, with Thee is the fountain of life, in Thy light we shall see light.

O my God, when will the time come when Thou wilt lead my soul into Thy solitude?

Now we can afford to grow old joyfully, to see the leaves fall, and the branches left bare, to be stripped gradually of all the treasures that youth enriched us with. The old home is lost, that in our homelessness we may begin to long more for our real Eternal Home. If we lose any real good from day to day, we press on to God to find it restored for ever in God, with the added joy of finding all that made it precious to us is from God, and abides for us for ever in God.

"Life, when it touches God, is no longer a ship becalmed, or vexed with baffling winds, but homeward bound, making its way to port with all sails set."[1]

Now let the little time that remains for us here below pass like a watch in the night, let it pass as shall please God, the sooner the better, for each day shall be a step towards home. Let everything fall away by degrees and leave us, and we lose nothing; but only exchange perishing things for eternal—for God Himself Who is our Home.

[1] From "Christian Life a Response."

"O Home most blessed in the City above. O cloudless day of Eternity, which no night obscures, whose never-setting sun is the Truth supreme, day ever joyful, ever secure, and never changing into its contrary. O that that day had dawned, and that all these things of time had come to an end."—à Kempis, "The Imitation of Christ," Book IV., Chap. xlviii.

CARDINAL NEWMAN'S MEDITATION ON GOD, THE SOLE STAY FOR ETERNITY.

My God, I believe, and know and adore Thee as infinite in the multiplicity and depth of Thy attributes. I adore Thee as containing in Thyself an abundance of all that can delight and satisfy the soul. I know, on the contrary, and from sad experience, I am too sure, that whatever is created, whatever is earthly, pleases for the time, and then palls and is a weariness. I believe that, were it my lot to live the long antediluvian life, and to live it without Thee, I should be utterly, inconceivably wretched at the end of it. . . . I should feel it like solitary confinement, for I should find myself shut up in myself without companion, if I could not converse with Thee, my God. Thou only, O my infinite Lord, art ever new, though Thou art the ancient of days—the last as well as the first.

Thou, O my God, art ever new, though Thou art the most ancient—Thou alone art the food for eternity. . . . I must live on . . . and without Thee eternity would be eternal misery. In Thee alone have I that which can stay me up for ever. . . . Thou alone art inexhaustible, and ever offerest to me something new to know, something new to love. At the end of millions

of years I shall find in Thee the same, or rather greater, sweetness than at first, and shall seem then only to be beginning to enjoy Thee: and so on for eternity I shall ever be a little child beginning to be taught the rudiments of Thy infinite Divine nature. For Thou art Thyself the seat and centre of all good, and the only substance in this universe of shadows, and the heaven in which blessed spirits live and rejoice.

My God, I take Thee for my portion . . . I give up the world for Thee. . . . To Whom should I go?[1]

[1] Meditations and Devotions," p. 600.

APPENDIX.

It was intended to include in this volume a selection of specially interesting passages from the Poets referring to old age, but it had to be omitted for lack of space. It may, however, be worth while to indicate the passages chosen, which may easily be found in any library.

1. Robert Browning—

The Flight of the Duchess—"So at the last shall come old age—touches the soul, and the soul awakes, then——"

Abt Vogler—"Is this your comfort to me?—Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?"

Rabbi Ben Ezra—"Grow old along with me. Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same."

2. Wordsworth—

Star-gazers.

The Leech-gatherer.

To the Daisy—"Bright flower whose home is everywhere."

The Primrose of the Rock.

Miscellaneous Sonnets, VIII.—*To Miss Gillies*; also Sonnet IX., *On the same subject.* Sonnets on a portrait of Mrs. Wordsworth, drawn in her later years.

Ode on Intimations of Immortality.

Miscellaneous Sonnets. Part II., VI.—"In my mind's eye a temple . . ."

Evening Voluntaries II.—"The sun that seemed so mildly to retire."

From *The Excursion,* Book II.—"So was he lifted—and I descended" (with Sir Walter Raleigh's Comment, p. 219).

3. S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI—

The Canticle of the Sun, translated by Matthew Arnold.

4. RABINDRANATH TAJORE—

"I have had my invitation—in one salutation to thee."

5. REV. S. J. STONE—

"Morning, Robert."

6. JOHN BUNYAN—

Pilgrim's Progress—The finding of "Old Honest."

7. SHAKESPEARE—

"*As you Like It,*" Act ii., Scene iii. Orlando and Old Adam.

8. TENNYSON—

Ulysses—"Much have I seen—and not to yield."

9. REV. F. W. FABER—

The Old Labourer. Hymn No. 128.

10. W. H. OGILVIE—

A Royal Heart.

11. GEORGE HERBERT—

Longing—"O loose the frame—old acquaintance plead."

Printed by Jarrold & Sons, Ltd., Norwich, England.

GEN. THEO. SEMINARY LIBRARY

By the Rev. GEORGE CONGREVE.

Address on Preparation for General Communion. 2d. net.

The Interior Life, and Other Addresses. Cloth, 5s. net.

Of Advance in Lent. 1d. net.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins. Addresses given in Retreat. 1s. 6d. net; cloth, 2s. 6d. net.

The Peace of Jerusalem. 1d. net.

The Sacrifice of Christ. 1d. net.

Suffering with Christ. 1d. net.

The Fourth Year of the War. 1d. net.

Edited by the Rev. GEORGE GONGREVE.

Letters of Richard Meux Benson, Student of Christ Church; Founder and First Superior of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, Cowley. Selected and arranged by the Rev. GEORGE CONGREVE, and the Rev. W. H. LONGRIDGE, of the same Society. With an Introductory Memoir by the Right Rev. A. C. HALL, D.D., Bishop of Vermont, U.S.A. With Three Portraits. Cloth, 6s. net.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO., LTD.

London and Oxford.

65413 243.4
Congreve, Rev. George C76

Treasures of hope for the evening of life.

1919 Apr. 5	W. J. Brown	Apr 7			

243.4
C76 65413